1016A

Dear little friends

I often think of you and the insight answers you gave to my questions when that afternoon we had sat together.

I never got the time whilst I was at [illegible] Hall to send you a note thanking you for the gifts of love you had given me. That I donate for [illegible] my [illegible] and hoped to [illegible] those gifts to the Ashram

1017A

children about whom you should ask aunty [illegible] to tell you something. But I was never able to reach the Ashram.

Is it not funny that you should receive a letter from a prison. But though inside a prison I don't feel like being a prisoner. [illegible] not conscious [illegible] done any [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

MAHATMA GANDHI

XLIX

(January - May 1932)

सत्यमेव जयते

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PREFACE

This volume covers the first five months (January 4 to May 31, 1932) of Gandhiji's detention in Yeravda Jail after his return from the Round Table Conference in London. The imprisonment gave Gandhiji much-needed rest after nearly a year of strenuous political activity which left him so exhausted that, during the first few days in jail, we find him noting in his Diary and reporting in letters to Mirabehn and Narandas Gandhi that he was making up for arrears of sleep (pp. 4, 13 and 505-6). In the company of Vallabhbhai Patel, who was arrested at the same time as Gandhiji and lodged with him in Yeravda Jail, and Mahadev Desai who joined them in March, Gandhiji seems to have relaxed himself completely for a few months and, as the contents of this volume and Mahadev Desai's Diary for the period show, passed his time in peace such as he was not destined to enjoy ever again in his life.

On landing in Bombay on December 28, 1931, Gandhiji found that the Government was determined to destroy the influence of the Congress. It refused to enter into negotiation with him except on terms which would be humiliating for him and the Congress to accept, and he, therefore, advised the country to resume civil disobedience. But, as he said in a letter written from jail, to the Secretary of State for India, he had "reached Bombay with every intention of co-operating" (p. 10) and was psychologically unprepared for a renewal of the struggle. The imprisonment, therefore, came to him probably as a great relief. "Infinite is God's mercy", he said in the note addressed to Vallabhbhai on being told of the arrival of the police (p. 1).

As was usual with Gandhiji, once he was in jail he ceased to take further interest in political developments in the country, except to address a letter of gentle protest, first to the Governor of Bombay and then to the Secretary of State, against the excessive repression resorted to by the Government to put down the civil disobedience movement. In a hurriedly-written note to Verrier Elwin at the time of arrest, Gandhiji had asked him to tell the British people "that I love them even as I love my own countrymen. I have never done anything towards them in hatred or malice and God willing I shall never do anything in that manner in future" (p. 2). The letter to the Governor concluded with a similar assurance: "I write this as a friend wishing well to the

English. . . . I would like the fight to be conducted honourably on either side so that at the end of it either party may be able to say of the other that there was no malice behind its actions" (p. 20). The letter to Sir Samuel Hoare was couched in stronger terms: "Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called the legitimate limit. A Government terrorism is spreading through the land. Both English and Indian officials are being brutalized." And he hinted that, as a satyagrahi, he might have to embark on an indefinite fast in order to prevent further embitterment of the already bitter relations between the two peoples (p. 192).

Concerned though he was about the human consequences of repression, Gandhiji was far more seriously exercised over the possibility of the British Government granting separate electorates to the Depressed Classes, a step which, he thought, would "vivisect and disrupt" Hinduism. Though he admitted that "no penance that caste Hindus may do can, in any way, compensate for the calculated degradation to which they have consigned the Depressed Classes for centuries", he held that "separate electorate is neither penance nor any remedy" for that degradation (p. 191). He, therefore, informed the British Government that "in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, I must fast unto death", urging in defence of his decision that "for me the contemplated step is not a method, it is part of my being. It is a call of conscience which I dare not disobey . . ." (p. 191). The fast, when it came later in September, gave a new turn to the national movement and led ultimately to the suspension of the civil disobedience movement in favour of constructive work for amelioration of the conditions of the Harijans, as the Depressed Classes came to be called.

As in 1930, this time also Gandhiji spent much of the time in jail in spinning and writing letters but in addition, as the entries in the Diary show, he did a great deal of general reading and found time as well for a serious study of economics and astronomy, watching the stars with great zest. The letters, though they served for him a primarily moral and educative purpose (p. 457), also satisfied a strongly felt need for human contacts. Requesting the Government's permission to meet fellow-prisoners, Gandhiji said: "This meeting of some of my companions now and then is a human want I may not deny myself without shaking and impairing the whole nervous system" (p. 173). It was this "human want" that was also met by contacts through letters. Writing to Maganlal, son of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta, he

says: "Remember that parents can never have enough of letters from their children" (p. 493). Gandhiji was as father to many co-workers and Ashram inmates and he, therefore, welcomed, and answered letters from them on all subjects ranging from serious metaphysical problems to the best way of brushing one's teeth (pp. 214-5).

To Gandhiji nothing was too trivial or beneath notice. Advising the Ashram boys and girls how to make their letters interesting, he said: "So many things happen every day around you that, if you properly observe them, you will be able to write enough to fill pages" (p. 89). Some of his own letters illustrate this abounding curiosity of Gandhiji and his interest in the minutest details of life. The descriptions of the cat and her ways with the kitten (pp. 413-4 and 466-7) are a fine example of Gandhiji's gift of observation. In the articles on "Watching the Heavens" (pp. 295-9 and 312-5), we see a side of Gandhiji's intellectual personality which his political and ethical concerns did not let him satisfy fully. In them his sense of the vastness, orderliness and beauty of creation finds almost poetic expression. "No drama", he wrote, "composed or acted by human beings can ever equal the great spectacle which nature has arranged for us on the stage of the sky" (pp. 297-8). Witnessing the ever-changing patterns of this eternal dance, he seemed to hear "those shining bodies in their utter silence singing the praise of God" (p. 298). "This study", he told Mirabehn, "puts me in more tune with the infinite" (p. 342), for the sight "instantaneously reveals the presence of God" (p. 296).

The letters to Narandas Gandhi are mainly about the affairs of the Ashram. They illustrate at once Gandhiji's concern for the moral and spiritual progress of its inmates and for the well-being of Narandas. Besides offering advice regarding the human and administrative problems that arose from time to time, Gandhiji also sent suggestions for new experiments to make the Ashram an ever better instrument of service. But he was anxious not to impose too heavy a burden on Narandas and wrote to him: "I am simply pouring out before you the stream of thoughts . . .. You are a steady man, and, therefore, I do not hesitate to put before you whatever ideas come to me. . . . When you are fed up with this, please drop a hint and I shall calm down" (p. 436).

The letters to Mirabehn reveal a new phase in their relationship. He had, Gandhiji admits to Premabehn, "not made any man or woman weep as bitterly as I have made her. My hardness of heart, impatience and ignorant attachment were respon-

sible for such conduct. I . . . wish to see her perfect. The moment I see any imperfection in her . . . I rebuke her sharply. . . . These instances have opened my eyes to the presence of violence in me and, recalling them, I have been trying to reform myself" (p. 157). We see this change of attitude reflected in Gandhiji's letters to Mirabehn. Advising her to exercise self-control regarding visits to him, he says: "But self-control to be self-control must brace one up. It becomes mechanical or superimposed when it unnerves or saddens one" (p. 61). He, therefore, permitted her to visit him as often as she pleased if she found that self-denial in this matter depressed her. Gandhiji had often insisted in the past that Mirabehn would serve him best by serving his cause. We find him relenting now. "When I come out", he tells her, "you shall certainly be with me and resume your original work of personal service. I quite clearly see that it is the only way for your self-expansion. I shall no longer be guilty as I have been before of thwarting you in any way whatsoever. . . . I see once more that good government is no substitute for self-government" (p. 279).

It was, however, Premabehn Kantak who drew out Gandhiji into some of the rarest personal references to be found in his letters. He encouraged her to put him any questions she liked, and she seems to have availed herself of the permission without any inhibitions. Answering her questions about the Ashram, he explained how "it subserved moral and economic ends alike", and how through service of the country and service of the world it could "help us to attain *moksha*, to see God" (p. 38). While hinting to other correspondents of "a faint glimpse" (p. 42) and an "almost a matter of direct experience" (p. 223) of the thought-free, but far from inert, state of pure consciousness, he wrote to her at some length about the knowledge of Brahman "which does not speak about itself" but whose presence, like the sun's, is "revealed by its own light" (p. 428). Gandhiji welcomed her frank criticisms because, as he told her: "God has never let any delusion of mine last for ever. . . . Your letters help that process of awakening" (p. 157). Admitting the justice of her description of his inconsistencies, Gandhiji said: "The writer of articles in *Young India* is one person, and the man whom the inmates of the Ashram know intimately is another. . . . I am, moreover, a votary of truth and can make no attempt consciously to hide my weaknesses. Hence, the Kauravas dwelling in me make their presence felt in one way or another" (p. 94). The Kauravas, he felt, were being vanquished but "one cannot yet be positive about that", for "the final judgment about

a man can be expressed only after his death" (pp. 93-4).

Writing to her about his visit to Rome on his return journey from England, Gandhiji said: "I very much enjoyed seeing the paintings in Rome . . .. If I could spend two or three months there, I would go and see the paintings and sculptures every day and study them attentively." Comparing European art with Indian art, he said: "Indian art is entirely a product of the imagination. European art is imitation of Nature." "You will be able to see from this", he concluded, "that I do take interest in art. But I have renounced, have had to renounce, many such interests" for the sake of "the joy which everything connected with the search for truth gives me . . ." (p. 37).

Gandhiji wrote to the Ashram inmates about his experiences in England. He described to the boys and girls his visit to a Montessori school and a children's tea-party. Gandhiji held up before the women the example of European women, with their fearlessness, spirit of service and capacity for self-sacrifice. Though Indian women were in no way inferior to European women, he felt that much of their strength lay suppressed (p. 33). "I have observed one great defect in our women", he said, "namely, that they hide their thoughts from the world. . . . At every step they do things which they dislike in their hearts and believe that they must do them" (p. 265).

From his rich experience in spiritual striving, Gandhiji offered valuable guidance to other seekers of truth. But he rejected a suggestion that he should write a *smriti*. "What I write or say", he explained, "has not been thought out in conformity with a system. I have only enough strength to enable me to meet every situation as it arises in the course of my quest for truth" (p. 256). Stating the same thing in a different way in a letter to Narandas Gandhi, he said: "I have one limitation, or say a gift. I express certain thoughts only in certain circumstances. . . . my ship sails as the wind blows. I have no map of the course with me. . . . Having such a map is contrary to the spirit of *bhakti*" (p. 32). He relied upon spontaneous intuitions of the heart in interpreting Shastras, too. "The seeker", he said, "should faithfully adhere to the meaning that appeals to his heart and act accordingly. . . . For the person wishing to construct a way of life for himself, there is only one harmony to be achieved—between the meaning accepted by him and his daily life" (p. 257).

The letters on the *Gita* provide for the most part a clear, flowing summary of the great poem's main argument that progressive purification of the mind through good actions and devotion to

God leads ultimately to realization of absolute truth. Refusing any facile or premature choice between the empirical and the spiritual world, Gandhiji asserted that "the Ashram exists in our hearts as much as it does on the bank of the Sabarmati" (p. 48). He recognized that of all spiritual maladies the one common "cause is always one and that is the ego. The remedy also is one—giving up the ego, that is, reducing oneself to a cipher" (p. 106). In this purification of the mind and attenuation of the ego, not only disinterested service but a shared enjoyment of the old heroic myths could, according to Gandhiji, play a useful part. The war against evil has to be waged simultaneously within one's heart and in the world without. While the external enemy is social or institutional and changes from age to age, the internal enemy is inherent in our common human nature and can only be overcome by invoking the God in man. Hence Gandhiji's acceptance and use of "poetic truth" through *adhyatmika* interpretation of the national epics. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* describe "the eternal war between God and demon in man, between Rama and Ravana" (p. 111). "The real Kurukshetra is the human heart which is also dharmakshetra (the field of righteousness)" (p. 113). Unsparing condemnation of evil, while sparing evil-doers, is the duty of the honest seeker who approaches absolute truth (*sat*) through firm acceptance and strenuous practice of the relative truth (*satya*) as he sees it from time to time; the relative at each stage is "for us as good as the absolute" (pp. 478-9).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the January 1969 edition.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to documents, M.M.U. to the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit and S.G. to the photostats of the Sevagram Collection available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

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For research and reference facilities, we owe thanks to the All-India Congress Committee Library, the Research and Reference Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Pyarelal Nayyar, New Delhi, and, for assistance in photo-printing documents, to the Photo Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi.

CONTENTS

[1] To be omitted from this volume; *vide* Errata.

[1],[2],[3]&[4] To be omitted from this volume; *vide* Errata.

[1] To be omitted from this volume; *vide* Errata.

1. MESSAGE TO AHMEDABAD WORKERS[1]

[January 4, 1932][2]

You must keep your fair name.

Give up liquor, wear only khaddar, live harmoniously. Follow the instructions of Anasuyabehn and Mr. Shankerlal Banker.

Educate your children.

Do your work righteously.

Defend your rights without harbouring any malice against your employers.

Give your fullest contribution to the swaraj *yajna*.

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-1-1932

2. MESSAGE TO AMERICA

January 4, 1932

Even as America won its Independence through suffering, valour and sacrifice, so shall India in God's good time achieve her freedom by suffering, sacrifice, and non-violence.

Home Department, Political, File No. 141, pp. 15-7, 1932. Courtesy: National Archives of India

3. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL[3]

January 4, 1932

Infinite is God's mercy. Please tell the people never to swerve from truth and non-violence. Never to flinch, but to give their lives and all to win swaraj.

The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin, p. 67

[1] This and the following three items were written by Gandhiji soon after his arrest during the early hours. In *Young India*, 7-1-1932, Mahadev Desai had reported in "The Historic Week" that Gandhiji was arrested, as in the past, "under Regulation XXV of 1827 for removal of inconvenient persons without assignable reasons".

[2] From *Young India*, 7-1-1932

[3] In *Young India*, 7-1-1932, this was reported under the title "The Historic Week" by Mahadev Desai who had explained that Gandhiji gave this "mes-

4. *LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN*[1]

January 4, 1932

MY DEAR ELWIN,

I am so glad you have come. I would like you yourself to tell your countrymen that I love them even as I love my own countrymen. I have never done anything towards them in hatred or malice and God willing I shall never do anything in that manner in future. I am acting no differently towards them now from what I have done under similar circumstances towards my own kith and kin.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 9697. Courtesy: Eldyth Elwin. Also *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin*, p. 67

5. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

YERAVDA PRISON[2],
January 5, 1932

CHI. MIRA[3],

This goes as a business letter. Therefore no reference to it in the Press.

Please send me the larger size flask. It will be useful for keeping hot water, saving the labour of warders early morning.

I gave a cheque for Rs. 800 to Mahadev with instructions. I do not think it needed endorsement. See whether he has it and if it needs endorsement.

---

sage to the people of India through a note to Vallabhbhai Patel [the Congress President] who he did not know was under arrest at the same time".

[1] In *Young India*, 7-1-1932, Mahadev Desai had reported that Gandhiji sent this message "to all Englishmen through Verrier Elwin". For the latter's account of the arrest, *vide* Appendix I.

[2] Also called Yeravda Mandir; *vide* "Letter to Vimalchandra V. Desai", p. 3. The place-line is not reproduced in subsequent letters. Gandhiji was in Yeravda Prison from January 4, 1932 to May 8, 1933.

[3] The source has this in Devanagari in this and other letters to Mirabehn.

We are both[1] well.
Love to all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6209. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9675

6. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

January 5, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

I have been writing to you regularly. I am not sure if sometimes I forget about it. But one who follows the path of non-violence would not pay a person in the same coin. He would do a good turn to someone who has done nothing for him or even to one who has done him harm. Hence, even if I am lazy, you should not be. If your yarn snapped 12 times in 47 turns, you could have done 36 more turns if it had not snapped at all. It is my experience that if the yarn snaps once, re-uniting it takes the time required for spinning three turns.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9943. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

7. *LETTER TO VIMALCHANDRA V. DESAI*

YERAVDA MANDIR,
January 8, 1932

CHI. NANU,

I got your letter. I was very glad. Write to me in this way from time to time. See if you can write with pen and ink.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 5758. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was with Gandhiji in Yeravda jail.

8. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

January 11, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

If I wished to write to you at leisure, or write at all, I had no option but to go to jail. I got today the permission to write letters and so I am writing my very first letter to you.

The Sardar's being with me is a novel feature of my imprisonment this time. I still feel tired and my hunger for sleep has not yet been fully satisfied, and so I do no work except a little reading and sacrificial spinning. Both of us keep good health. My diet is almost the same that it was when I was outside. Instead of honey, I take jaggery mixed in hot water. The Sardar's diet consists mainly of tea, bread and vegetables. He used to eat rice when outside, but doesn't eat it here. The rice cooked here may not agree with him. He drinks some milk. His throat complaint persists. You should write to me regularly. I have no precise information as to who have been arrested. Please let me have this information, so that I may know to whom I should write.

I saw Jamna in Bombay. I didn't get time to talk much with anyone. You should now write to me and give me news about her and about others, or those persons themselves should write. I have not written to Kakasaheb, Chhaganlal Joshi, etc., thinking that they are already in jail.

It is surprising that leather for soles of sandals is not available there. It must be available in the Ashram and at several other places. Talk to Surendra about this and ask him to write to me.

I read today about Ba having been arrested. I am glad. If you are permitted to forward my letter to her, do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8199. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

9. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 12, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. Now you can write as usual. Did you notice that you forgot to send with me the carding-bow that I had selected? I asked for the handy thing because the larger size required the other paraphernalia. Whenever you or anyone else comes, the larger size may be brought. Thanks to your foresight, I have still quite an amount of slivers. I am therefore not anxious about the bow. And I am still resting, getting as much sleep as I can. The rest of the information about me from my letter to Narandas.

Where are the Privats? How are they keeping in health? My love to them. Let them write. I hope they had a good time at the Ashram. Have the German friends turned up? And Miss Barker? What about Verrier and Shamrao[1]? I hope Pyarelal sent the parcels to Evans and Rogers[2]? Where is he and where is Devdas? What about Bernard?

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6210. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9676

10. LETTER TO MAITRI GIRI

January 12, 1932

CHI. MAITRI,

You have often been in my thoughts. Write to me. I hope that you have fully recovered from your injury.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6233

[1] Shamrao Hivale, Verrier Elwin's friend and co-worker

[2] In *Bapu's Letters to Mira,* Mirabehn explains: "Evans and Rogers were the two stalwart detectives whom the British Government had placed in continual attendance on Bapu throughout his Round Table visit. Bapu had arranged to send them each a watch with special engraving."

11. LETTER TO MAHALAKSHMI M. THAKKAR

January 12, 193[2][1]

CHI. MAHALAKSHMI,

I got your letter. I often think about you all and also wish to write. But I got no time at all while I was outside jail. I see that I shall definitely be able to write from here.

The same diet does not suit all persons. In the last resort, every person has to decide for himself the quantity and the type of food he should eat, having regard to his capacity. I have discovered one thing at any rate from my own experience and that of others, namely, that ground-nut does not agree with any person for long, and it must, therefore, be given up. In any case, it should not be given to children to eat. It will not matter if they eat it occasionally. It will do them no harm if they never eat it. Nor is it necessary to eat coconut. Almonds are useful, of course. But, in your case, I think the following diet will be good.

Milk, boiled or unboiled, to a maximum of three seers.

Dates and currants, two or three sour lemons to be taken either with soda, as I take them, or in warm water with honey or jaggery. Once during the day raw carrots or radish (of the less pungent variety) or salad leaves or tender leaves of cabbage. Two or three *tolas* of any of these items should be chewed thoroughly. Eat them with a little salt. If you eat carrots or these leaves, that will probably satisfy your sense of hunger. The dates need not be soaked [in water]. They should be put in milk and eaten as they are. If any of them are not clean, they should of course be washed. If they are not soaked [in water] you will be required to chew them and that will probably give you a feeling of satisfaction. Do not start eating almonds and pistachio nuts just now. Try the diet I have suggested. You will probably feel lighter with it and the menstrual flow will become regular. There is no harm in taking curds instead of milk. If the curds are sour you may add some soda according to how sour they are. You should also eat raw tomatoes. This diet will stop gas. If unboiled milk does not agree with you, you should not con-

[1] The source has "1931", which is a slip for "1932"; *vide* "Diary, 1932", the entry under "January 13"; also "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", p. 9.

sider it wrong to take boiled milk. The addition of soda will most probably stop the gas.

I had seen the children in Bombay. I saw them coughing and that had pained me. They also may be given the diet suggested above. Their weight ought to increase. Just now they should not be given dry fruit at all. You should give them more honey. They may take it either with water or with tomatoes. As for milk, it will be better if they drink it unboiled. Ground-nuts and honey never form a good combination. I think I have now answered all your questions. If any question is left out and if you are still free, you may ask it again.

My blessings to all the women. I will write to all of them one after another. Rama should write to me. I now look upon all the women as mere guests. Take care of your health and see that it does not suffer. I had thought that your health was excellent.

Ask Madhavji to write to me. If you think it necessary to send this letter to Calcutta for the sake of the children, you may do so. The person there who looks after them should write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Since I got your letter late, this letter will be posted tomorrow though I have dated it today.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6811

12. LETTER TO KASHINATH AND KALAVATI TRIVEDI

January 12, 1932

CHI. KASHINATH,

I got your letter. For the present, remain where you are and learn through patience. This is enough today.[1]

CHI. KALAVATI,

I got your letter. I have a faint impression that you did take the pledge. Whatever that be, do what Narandas asks you to do.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati and Hindi: G.N. 5284

[1] What follows is in Hindi.

13. LETTER TO GANGADEVI SANADHYA

January 12, 1932

CHI. GANGADEVI,

You and Panditji were in my mind often enough, but there was no time for letter-writing. How are both of you and how is your health now? Can Panditji still work hard? How is Hariprasad[1] keeping?

What is the progress on Panditji's farm? What fruits and vegetables are being grown? Is any produce being sent into the city for sale? Can the farm stand on its feet?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2545

14. LETTER TO ABBAS

January 13, 1932

CHI. ABBAS,

Write to me and tell me what improvements you have adopted in your method of carding, etc., whether you have accepted the improvements suggested by Mathuradas[2] and whether anybody has taken up the latter's work. I hope you keep good health. How many attend the class at present?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6305

[1] Adopted son of Gangadevi and Totaram Sanadhya
[2] Mathuradas Purushottam, a khadi expert

15. LETTER TO KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI

January 13, 1932

RESPECTED KHUSHALBHAI[1],

I got in Bombay your blessing in the form of your letter. I had hoped to return to the Ashram in fulfilment of your blessing, but God had ordained some other blessing for me and so now I send my respectful greetings to you both from here. If you keep good health there and if the Ashram remains, I should very much like you to stay on there. Remember me sometimes. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me. Both of us keep good health. The cold also is not too much.

Humble greetings from
MOHANDAS

From Gujarati: C.W. 9221. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

16. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 13, 193[2][2]

CHI. NARANDAS,

Before posting my letter to you yesterday, I forgot to put into the envelope the letter to Lakshmidas. You will find it with this. I send as many others as I could write. I got a letter from Mahalakshmi yesterday. While replying to her,[3] I wrote to some others as well. I must now hand this over, so I will not write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Professor Edward Thompson[4] will land in Bombay on the 15th. He may come to the Ashram; if he does, put him up. Look

[1] Gandhiji's cousin and father of Narandas Gandhi

[2] The source has "1931", but in his letter dated December 5, 1931 (C.W. 9409) to P. Hertzog, E. Thompson mentions his intention of visiting India in "the following year". Again, in 1931 Mirabehn was away from the Ashram on this date, but in 1932 she was there.

[3] *Vide* pp. 6-7.

[4] Author of *The Other Side of the Medal, Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, Life of Rabindranath Tagore,* etc.

after his comforts. If he doesn't come on his own, write or send a wire to him to invite him. He will probably arrive by a P. & O. liner. Mirabehn knows.

BAPU

[PPS.]

There are eight letters besides that for Lakshmidas.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8200. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

17. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

January 15, 1932

DEAR SIR SAMUEL[1],

I had not expected to write to you, at any rate not quite so soon from a prison.

I had promised to let you know before I took any serious step. But the events came upon me with such a sudden rush that there was no time or choice left for me. I have no doubt you have seen the telegrams exchanged between the Viceroy and me.[2] I tried my best to keep up co-operation but failed in my opinion through no fault of my own. I cannot help feeling that the Viceroy was wholly in the wrong in refusing to see me except on impossible conditions. I have just written a personal letter to Lord Willingdon urging him to reconsider his position.

I can assure you that I reached Bombay with every intention of co-operating. Your letter, for which pray accept my thanks, cleared one difficulty. And I had hoped that a heart to heart talk with the Viceroy would clear up the difficulty about the ordinances and administration in the interim. Indeed I had planned things about Hindu-Muslim question and other matters with Sir Akbar Hydari who was on the same boat with me and in ignorance of what was happening in India. I had given, as you might have seen, the day before landing, a hopeful message[3] to Reuter's representative on board. But the events I saw happening in India did startle me. I at once sought an interview with the Viceroy with the result you know.

Let me add this: cruel suggestions have appeared in the Press that my colleagues forced me to the position I took up.

[1] Secretary of State for India
[2] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII.
[3] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, p. 440.

There is no warrant whatsoever for them. The initiative for every step was mine and it was a logical outcome of my creed of satyagraha. I cannot wish for more loyal colleagues. In matters of satyagraha they yield to my judgment as to an expert's[1]. I don't expect you to reply to this letter. I thought I should just tell you what I think about it all. Whatever happens, I shall always retain happy recollections of our meetings.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: C.W. 9556. Courtesy: India Office Library

18. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

January 15, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

You have given a fine description of your visit to Kashi. The fact that the Master's[2] pupils are carrying on his work in a worthy manner should make all of us happy. You should now resume your visits among Chharas[3]. If you can cultivate close contacts with them and influence them, it will be a great achievement.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 220. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

19. LETTER TO PADMA

January 15, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

Vasumatibehn told me that you had not fully recovered. Write to me and give me detailed news about your health. Where is Sarojinidevi[4] at present? And how is she? Do you get any news about Father? Do you write to him? Tell me what work you do every day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6128. Also C.W. 3480. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

[1] The source has "as if an expert".
[2] Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, addressee's music teacher
[3] An ex-criminal tribe of central Gujarat who gave some trouble to the Ashram people
[4] Addressee's mother

20. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

January 15, 1932

BHAI VALJI,

How are you both? Has the health of either improved a little? How is Kamalnayan? Ask him to write to me. Has he made any progress in his studies? Does he feel satisfied? I hope you wander about a great deal there. Remember that you have gone there not to read but to improve your health. As you wander in the midst of Nature, you will daily find in her something new to read.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7417. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

21. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 17, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

You will know about us from my letter[1] to Mirabehn. If I know who are still in the Ashram, I can write to them. We are eager to hear from you. You can write at any time. If you have not written already write as soon as you get this letter.

I have already written twice[2]. This is the third time. The letter which I wrote to you asking you to send me a few things was in addition. How is Radha? Write to me about the health of all the others.

Blessings to all.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

How is Punjabhai? Where does he stay?

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8201. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* the following item.
[2] *Vide* pp. 4 & 9-10.

22. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 17/18, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have the things sent by you. The sandals are too flimsy to last beyond a month or two, that is to say, the soles will be worn out. Sole leather is therefore a necessity. If you cannot procure it, I shall have to fall back upon rubber soles.

Are the Privats still there? Please give or send my love to them. You will send my love also to the Rollands.

We are both still keeping well. My food is the same as outside except that I have added curds for the evening meal. There is daily at least two hours' walk divided between morning and evening. I have not yet gone beyond 200 rounds of yarn. But I feel that by next week I shall have finished my arrears of sleep. I must be sleeping altogether nine hours during 24 hours. I am doing a fair amount of reading.

I had expected an Ashram mail by this time. Do not send me the other carding-bow just yet.

Love.

BAPU

January 18, 1932

[PS.]

I must apologize. I discovered today that you had packed the bow in the matting.[1]

From the original: C.W. 6211. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9677

23. LETTER TO JAISHANKAR P. TRIVEDI

January 18, 1932

BHAI TRIVEDI[2],

I got the two lots of fruit and vegetables which you sent. Please don't send any more now. Both of us get these things here if we want them. It would be better from every point of view that you should use your time and money for more important

[1] *Vide* also p. 5.

[2] Prof. J. P. Trivedi of Poona Agriculture College

work. You may rest assured that, if I want anything, I will not hesitate to ask you for it. Surely you know this! I had met Manu[1] in Villeneuve. Send him my blessings.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1001

24. LETTER TO CHILDREN, KINGSLEY HALL

January 20, 1932

DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS,

I often think of you and the bright answers you gave to my questions when that afternoon we had sat together.[2]

I never got the time whilst I was at Kingsley Hall to send you a note thanking you for the gifts of love you had sent me. That I do now from my prison. I had hoped to transfer these gifts to the Ashram children about whom you should ask aunty Muriel[3] to tell you something. But I was never able to reach the Ashram.

Is it not funny that you should receive a letter from a prison! But though inside a prison I don't feel like being a prisoner. I am not conscious of having done anything wrong.

My love to you all.

Yours,
Whom you call uncle,
GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1016-a

[1] Manshankar, addressee's son
[2] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, pp. 41-2.
[3] Muriel Lester, Principal, Kingsley Hall, was Gandhiji's hostess in London during his visit to England from September to November, 1931.

25. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH*

January 20, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN,

I am glad that you teach the children in the kindergarten. You should write to me from time to time and tell me your experience, which children are well-behaved and which are undisciplined, what difficulties you have to face, etc. Narahari[1] teaches in Nasik and you teach in the Ashram. This is very good co-operation between you two.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5963

26. *LETTER TO ESTHER MENON*[2]

January 21, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

Your account of the meeting with the ailing sister[3] is touching. Give my love to her when you visit her again.

I hope you are at peace with yourself now. The children[4] must be quite well. Kiss them for me if they will let me kiss them.

Maria[5] was with me in Bombay. But I had hardly time to talk to her.

I hope Menon is doing well. My love to him and to all at Woodbrooke settlement[6]. Send my love to Miss Harrison and tell me where she is staying. Do you write to Maud Cheeseman?

Love.

BAPU

[1] Narahari Parikh, addressee's husband

[2] The Menon family were in England, at Selly Oak, Birmingham.

[3] An English girl, poor and bed-ridden, who was a great admirer of Gandhiji

[4] Addressee's daughters, Nan and Tangai

[5] Anne Marie Petersen

[6] The Quaker Centre, near Birmingham, in whose activities the addressee and her husband took part

[PS.]

Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me. Both of us are doing quite well.

From a photostat: No. 107. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, pp. 87-8

27. LETTER TO MAHAVIR GIRI

January 21, 1932

CHI. MAHAVIR,

I got your letter. I feel unhappy that your health has still not improved completely. Do you also wish to go to Darjeeling? None of you need go, if you don't wish to. And if you do go, make up your mind to return with your health fully recouped. I shall feel very unhappy if you become more ill there. If you do not go, consult Dr. Talwalkar and follow the treatment which he advises. If you decide to go, please let me know where you intend to stay, etc. If there is no proper accommodation for you where you go, I think you will be running a risk in going there. I don't regard you as a child. Decide like a grown-up and mature person and persuade Krishnamaiyadevi[1] also to think in the same way.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6231

28. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 21, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got the post from the Ashram today, after I had waited for it for many days. I was getting worried since I had received no reply. As you posted the packet as a parcel, it was delayed. On previous occasions, too, that is what happened. I see, however, that posting things as parcel costs less. You may, therefore, continue the practice if you wish to. You can do this. Send the many other letters as parcel and send yours separately, by ordinary post. That will save expenditure and I will get one

[1] Addressee's mother

letter immediately. Ordinarily you or anybody else will be able to write to me as often as necessary. Most probably I will get the letters immediately.

You have done nothing wrong in reproducing in the "Ashram Samachar"[1] the extract from my letter.

Anyone from the Ashram will be permitted to visit us. Others too, who have not become prominent in the political field, will be permitted; for instance, Pyare Ali[2], or Rama (Ranchhodbhai's). Three or four can come at a time. We are permitted to receive visitors once a week. But we don't wish to waste money in this manner. You may, therefore, permit people to come as and when you think proper. I wish to tell you what is permissible and what my general view is, and leave the rest to you. Don't think that I am putting any restriction. How can I judge what the circumstances there require, or measure the depth of people's feelings or their foolish attachment to me?

Allow Krishnamaiyadevi and others to go to Darjeeling. It will certainly mean expense, but that will be worth incurring. I suppose in Darjeeling they will stay with some friends and we shall have to pay only the fare. Give them the fare for the outward journey. As for the return fare, tell them that you will send a note which they can show and get money from Bhai Jivanlal of the Birla Brothers. That is, you can send them a letter of recommendation when they intend to return. Will Mahavir also go with them? If he does, let him stay there for five or six months. After he has recovered, he can take up some public work in Darjeeling. Similarly, send away the girls when they wish to go.

Where is Abbas Saheb? How does he keep? Inquire and let me know. How is Raojibhai's Vimala? Where is Raojibhai Manibhai of Sojitra? Where is Shivabhai?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Venilal[3] was very ill in Bombay. How is he now? You say that Navin has come to live there for the present. What exactly do you mean? Where does he stay just now and what does he do?

[1] A handwritten news bulletin of the Ashram

[2] A business man from Bombay who, along with his wife Noorbanu, was an ardent follower of Gandhiji

[3] Venilal Gandhi

The letters to the others will be posted on Tuesday. Take this letter to have been written for Dalbahadur Giri's family and for Kusum. My compliments to Kanti[1], Bal[2], Prithuraj[3] and other warriors. I will write to them later.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8202. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

29. *LETTER TO RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE*

January 22, 1932

DEAR RAMANAND BABU,

May I ask you for the same courtesy you extended to me during my last incarceration[4]? I did see the current issue of *The Modern Review.*

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE
SHANTINIKETAN[5]

From the original: C.W. 9526. Courtesy: Santa Devi

30. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

January 22, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. You did well in paying a visit to the women who are in prison.

There is no such thing as a miracle[6] in this world, or rather everything is a miracle. That the earth is hanging in space

[1] Kanti Gandhi, son of Harilal Gandhi

[2] D. B. Kalelkar's second son

[3] Son of Lakshmidas Asar

[4] During his last incarceration (May 5, 1930 to January 26, 1931) Gandhiji had written to the addressee: "I have permission to receive *The Modern Review*, among other magazines. Will you please send me copies from the May number? . . ." (*Vide* Vol. XLIII, p. 437.) *The Modern Review* was among the approved periodicals this time too; *vide* Appendix II.

[5] The postcard was redirected to: 2/1 Townshend Road, Bhawanipore, Calcutta.

[6] The addressee had asked Gandhiji what he thought of miracles.

without support and that we do not see the *atman* though we know that it dwells in our body — these are great miracles. Compared to them, other miracles are as trivial as the conjuror's mango tree.

"Keeping one's eye single"[1] means that one should not see with a distorted vision, that one should keep one's eyes pure and not cast lustful glances. The statement has no other meaning.

Sarojinidevi's case is a painful one. If, however, we behave towards her in a spirit of non-attachment, she will keep herself on the right path, no matter whether she continues to live there or lives in Prayag.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10267. Also C.W. 6716. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

31. LETTER TO SIR FREDERICK SYKES[2]

January 23, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

The cordial conversations I had with you last year embolden me to write this to you. If you would rather that, being a prisoner, I should not write to you, I shall cease to do so and this may be thrown away. If however you don't resent this letter, I may take the further liberty of writing again, should the occasion arise.

Whilst in my opinion all the ordinances are a tragic blunder and so utterly unnecessary, I can understand the Government taking a different view and trying to crush the Congress. The organization may be put out of action for a time. The spirit will never be crushed. But this is another story.

What I want to draw your attention to is the excesses that are being committed under the ordinances.

The breaking up of a peaceful meeting in Ahmedabad by severe lathi charges and running horses through the meeting appears to have been a barbarous procedure, several young men were severely and some women were slightly hurt. One young woman had her hair pulled. This information I glean from the newspapers supplied to me. In Nadiad the treatment is said to

[1] *Vide St. Matthew*, IV. 22
[2] Governor of Bombay

have been still more brutal and it is reported to have been the worst in Surat. Boys in two boarding houses are said to have been hurriedly dragged out of them and the houses taken over by the authorities. Such procedure brutalizes those who are engaged in carrying it out. It should be borne in mind that all this treatment is being meted out to those who do not retaliate and have not been known to have done any previous violence.

The authorities have taken possession of the National University buildings in Ahmedabad. The University has a rich collection of carefully selected books. There is a religious section to the library. It is admitted to be a unique library built up by devoted scholars. It contains some rare and valuable manuscripts. There is, too, a little museum which has an art collection. The grounds have valuable trees planted on them. The whole of this constructive effort — a fruit of ten years patient labour—is likely to be ruined without any just cause.

One of the most respectable Indians belonging to the celebrated Tyabji family, Mr. Abbas Tyabji who is 78-year-old and who is an ex-Chief Judge of the Baroda High Court is said to have been locked up in Nadiad along with other prisoners in what can only be described as a cage.

I ask you to investigate these statements. Denials by the parties charged can be regarded as no investigation. Often have such denials been proved to be worthless.

I have picked out but a few of what have appeared to me to be glaring instances of high-handedness. If past experience is any guide, probably the worst cases have not even been allowed to appear in the newspapers. Nor do I get all the newspapers.

I write this as a friend wishing well to the English. I am anxious that on both sides every avoidable cause of bitterness should be avoided. I would like the fight to be conducted honourably on either side so that at the end of it either party may be able to say of the other that there was no malice behind its actions.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI

SIR FREDERICK SYKES
BOMBAY

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(41), Pt. 1, pp. 15-6; also G.N. 3856

32. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 23, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

The long awaited post came from the Ashram only yesterday. I shall now get it regularly I expect. Of course, you were right in going to Bombay. You should be the sole judge finally as to where you would stay and what you would do.

When you write to the Privats, tell them they are constantly in my thoughts. They must on no account impair their health. They should write to me.

I have told you already not to bring or send the hanging bow.[1] You have sent me so many slivers that I shall not need to card for some weeks yet. And I am glad. I have not yet regained my bodily strength. I sleep at least thrice during the day in spite of full sleep between 9 p.m. and 3.45 a.m. I need sleep and rest as yet. I do not spin 500 yards [like][2] I did last year. I am doing the amount in two days. I am hoping however soon to be able to do 500 yards per day. I will not strain myself to do it. I shall try to conserve what energy there is still left in me. This is no notice to you to bring or send me more slivers. If I must have them I shall soon tell you. My health is excellent and so is Sardar Vallabhbhai's. I have simply told you how much rest I still need. The London wear and tear was terrific and I suppose the body now demands prolonged rest. The Bombay rush on the top of London's undid the good the voyage had undoubtedly done.

As to the visits, this time there is no difficulty. They have granted what I asked for last time. Weekly visits may therefore be paid. But this does not mean that someone must come every week. I impose no restrictions. I simply give the warning that we are poor people and therefore we have to be sparing in paying visits of love. There cannot be much business. And love prospers on self-denial. No more of philosophy. I know you will all do what is best. Those who are known to political fame of course cannot visit without special permission.

[1] *Vide* p. 13.

[2] From *Bapu's Letters to Mira*

My love to the sisters, Kamala and to yourself.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6212. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9678

33. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

January 23, 1932

CHI. KANTI,

I was glad to get your letter. Personally I was very happy that all of you were given a taste of the Government's kindness. If the experience does not make us angry but, on the contrary, fills our heart with compassion for the other party, and if we are as ready as ever to welcome more such experience, we shall have realized the true aim of our life. If anybody abused St. Francis, he would smile gently and thank God that He did not inspire that person to assault him, and if anybody assaulted him he would thank God that He did not inspire the latter to kill him outright. If anybody attempted to kill him, St. Francis would say that after all he did not try to torture him. The point is that he who has overcome love for his body and looks upon it only as an instrument will never be affected in his mind by anybody injuring his body.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8905. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

34. LETTER TO BAL KALELKAR

January 23, 1932

CHI. BAL,

I did get your letter, but I could find no time at all to reply. Now that I am here you may ask me whatever you wish to and I will try to answer. I have of course conveyed my congratulations to all of you who have plunged into the struggle with enthusiasm. Though I do not write separately to each one, all of you should write to me about your experiences. The little that I have written in the letter[1] to Kanti applies to you all. That letter contains all that I have to say for the present. Remember that none of us

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

should get elated [with the service we are able to do]. We should always be dissatisfied with what we can do. We come into this world not to incur debts, but to pay them. He who has no debts to discharge no longer needs to be burdened with a body. Such a one is a free soul, and a debtor has no reason to feel elated even when he pays off his whole debt. When he has done that, he only earns his rest. To be free from one's debts is to be free from bondage.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8904. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

35. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

January 23, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

Your letter has set my mind at rest. Everyone is being tested. We should pray in our hearts that God may regard us as fit to make a pure sacrifice. It will be enough if everyone of us does the task that falls to one's lot to the best of one's ability.

How is Kaku? What is he doing at present?

Do you take enough milk and fruit? Don't be stingy about them or shrink from taking them. Regard them as medicine. If you feel better with coffee, you can take that too.

Write to Nath[1] and request him to pay a visit from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro – 6 : G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 62. Also C.W. 8788. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

36. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

January 23, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I have your letter.

You have given a good explanation of rhythm beats. I shall find some time and try to follow the method you have suggested. However, the book has not yet reached me.

[1] Kedarnath Kulkarni, Kishorelal Mashruwala's guru

Your rule about Mathuri[1] is correct. She need not get up early. Nor should she have to bear any burden either of work or of study. She should be free to sleep and work as and when she likes. Take care about her diet. Her main food should be milk. She may take rice, but very little of it, and should take no pulses at all. It is necessary for her to take vegetables cooked without spices. It would be good if she eats one or two green tomatoes cooked.

Your advice regarding Gajanan[2] seems to me all right.

I was interested by your explanation about Panditji, the teacher[3]. I also like your having formed an Association. It seems but proper that you and his other pupils should first do something through your own efforts and then approach the public for help. That is the only right way for you. Please go slow with the scheme while the present conflagration lasts, though you may certainly do what is absolutely necessary.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 221. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

37. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

January 23, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I got your letter. Your first task is to build up a strong physique. You should not try to learn more than what you can while you play. Our real education lies in learning to be good. Everybody, whether healthy or ill, can do that. Knowledge of letters is like ornaments for the body. Can all people get them?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 260. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] Addressee's daughter, a singer
[2] Addressee's nephew
[3] Vishnu Digambar Paluskar; *vide* p. 11.

38. *LETTER TO GAJANAN V. KHARE*

January 23, 1932

CHI. GAJANAN,

I have your letter. The opinion expressed by Kakashri is correct. It is enough to be prepared to undergo suffering. No one will deter you from plunging into the sacrifice when the need arises. In the mean time you should devote yourself to your own jobs.

How are you progressing with your drawing?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 306. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

39. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

January 23, 1932

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have your letter. We at least could see each other, but what about the other women who could not even see me? However, I should have realized your eagerness and sent a special slip for you. Have it now. I should advise you not to exert yourself beyond your capacity. However, God will look after you all. Remember the first verse[1] of the women's prayer. It has universal application. You should not think that it is a prayer which was offered by someone thousands of years ago.

All of us are helpless, as Draupadi was. Before God such distinctions as man and woman lose all meaning. The same *atman* dwells in the man's and in the woman's body. In our infatuated state, we are deluded by the different bodily forms and are even overcome by passion. If we know the soul living within and, realizing that all individual selves are essentially one and the same, devote ourselves to the service of all, no disturbing thoughts would attack us and harass us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9322. Also C.W. 6597. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

[1] गोविन्द, द्वारिकावासिन्, कृष्ण, गोपीजनप्रिय, ।
कौरवै: परिभूतां मां किं न जानासि केशव ।।

40. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

January 23, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I got your letter written in a beautiful hand. Yes, one can get a [walking] stick[1] even in England. Do you know by heart all the chapters of the *Gita*? How many does Pushpa know? Why did she let herself fall ill? Has her nose grown a little? Tell her that, when it is held high, she should not go and get it snapped off. Do both of you rise early? Where is Kamala just now? Does she ever write to you?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4072. Also C.W. 36. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

41. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

January 23, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA (AUNT),

Yes. If I had not seen you in Bombay, I would not have thought of asking you to write to me. But having seen you there, I did not write a separate letter to you but said in my letter to Anandi that she should ask you to write. You have improved your handwriting.

Write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9462

[1] The reference is to Gandhiji's practice of placing his hand on a girl's shoulder for support while walking.

42. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

January 23, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA[1],

I was glad to get your letter. You have improved your handwriting. Do your lessons there with attention. Do you ever remember the Vidyapith? How is Mohan[2]?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5762. Also C.W. 2985. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

43. *LETTER TO VASUDEV*

January 23, 1932

BHAI VASUDEV,

I have your letter. The soul is ennobled by self-control. The true nature of the soul consists in a passionless state. That is why control over the emotions is imperative.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8903-a. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

44. *LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI*

January 24, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I had your letter. For how many days was Father kept at Nadiad? Did he suffer any hardship there? What are the arrangements for his food and other necessaries? Last time his beard was infested with lice. This time he should take precautions against that. He should ask for help for the purpose if necessary. Or he may ask for me to be brought there. Is he

[1] & [2] Daughter and son of Narahari Parikh

allowed to see everybody freely? How often are you allowed to see him? Tell him that Sardar and I think of him often and speak of the sacrifices made by him.

Why do you feel uneasy? God will take service from you as He wills. Convey to Mother on behalf of us both repeated *vandematarams* and repeated salaams, *Khuda Hafiz* and all else that may be befitting. How many months old is Sohaila's[1] baby now? I do know that you will keep your word. We shall talk more about it if and when God ordains that we meet. Write to me from time to time. Generally they give me all the letters received for me. There is no restriction, either, as to the number of letters that I can write from here. I am not allowed to write on political matters or to important personages like Father. But I may freely write sermons or love-letters to boys or girls like you. This freedom should be considered adequate.

Now I begin writing in Urdu. Hamida is a brave girl. God will give her great work to do and let her attain greatness. I wish for nothing more than that God should grant long life to Hamida. In this regard you also deserve thanks, for after all Hamida is your pupil, isn't she? Point out to me my mistakes. I hope this is enough exercise for today. *Khuda Hafiz.*

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Convey my blessings to Rohini, Radhabehn and others when you see them.[2]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9636

45. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

January 24, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I did see you in Bombay but could exchange no word with you. Now send me your account for all these months. Your health seemed to be all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1827

[1] Addressee's sister

[2] This sentence is in Gujarati in the source.

46. LETTER TO LALJI K. PARMAR

January 24, 1932

CHI. LALJI,

Mamasaheb[1] tells me in his letter that you are doing no work, that you have stopped weaving because you do not get yarn. How can one who can spin complain that he has no yarn? You yourself should spin and, when you have got enough yarn for one cloth-piece, you should weave it. You should also persuade your friends and neighbours to spin. One who is eager to serve always gets an opportunity to do so. Do not waste the training which has been given to you. Write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3295

47. LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ

January 24, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI,

I know I should not expect any letter from you, the more so now that you are a mother. I requested your father-in-law to find a name for the son, and he has passed on the responsibility to me. You should help me now. Suggest some names which both of you would like. Out of these I will select the one which I like best. How is Benarsi? Your father-in-law is what you would describe as an ideal father-in-law. Besides, he is ever ready to help others. But he has not the courage to return from England without having earned enough money there, and he is not likely to succeed in doing it. The only chance now is that, if you press him, he might return. Write to him and tell him that those for whose sake he wants to earn the wealth do not want it. Why, then, should he worry himself so much?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9059

[1] Presumably V. L. Phadke, who was running a Harijan Ashram in Godhra

48. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

January 24, 1932

BHAI VITHALDAS,

Just as I was asking Sardar whether he had any news about you, I got your letter. Your weakness seems to have persisted too long. Do not worry, however. Take complete rest and recover fully before you resume work. Meanwhile your mind is bound to be busy. A person who has special capacity for some particular work[1] can do much even through his ideas. That is the excellence of karmayoga.

Both of us are quite well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

My blessings to all friends in the Ashram at Sasvad.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9779

49. LETTER TO HARIPRASAD

January 24, 1932

CHI. HARIPRASAD,

God will reward you well for your devoted services to Gangadevi. But the *Gita* teaches us to perform our job or our service without consideration of the result. Therefore, on your part rendering of service is an end in itself and that is how it should be. I hope you are keeping well. Give me your daily routine.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2550

[1] The addressee was a khadi expert.

50. LETTER TO TULSI MAHER

January 24, 1932

CHI. TULSI MAHER,

I have your two letters. What can I write to you? The progress of your work is as regular as the rising and setting of the sun. Keep it up. I am being provided with *datuns*[1]. These days Sardar prepares them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6539

51. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 23[2]/25, 1932
3 p.m., Saturday,

CHI. NARANDAS,

I will write as many letters as I can and hand them over on Tuesdays for being posted. I cannot be as regular as I should like to be. I need rest. My health is very good, though. You will know more about it from my letter to Mirabehn. I was weighed today. The weight was 106½ pounds. The Sardar weighed 144½ lb. Only, I need plenty of rest and take it.

Abbas Saheb is your neighbour now. I suppose you go and inquire after him. If he requires any food, send it to him. Hamidabehn, together with Kanjibhai's wife and daughter, is also there. I suppose a woman from the Ashram visits them from time to time.

I cannot think from here what special work may be assigned to Tilakam. He must, of course, pick up Hindi. It is also desirable that he should learn spinning and weaving. Does he work to your satisfaction?

Afternoon, January 25[3], 1932

I had a painful letter from Champa. Ratilal seems to be harassing her a good deal. It would be desirable if Champa

[1] Twigs used for cleaning teeth

[2] The source has "24", but Saturday fell on January 23, 1932.

[3] The source has "24", but Chapter XIV of *Bhagavad Git*
in the letter was written on January 25, 1932; *vide* "Lette
21-2-1932, Chapter XIV; also "Diary, 1932", the last item in

could be separated from him on any pretext. She is not strong enough to bear any more children. It is likely that Ratilal is not able to control himself. We are faced with a very painful moral duty. From what Champa writes, it seems that Ratilal spends the whole day in the bungalow and beats the children whenever he feels the itch. I don't understand what you can do in this matter. If a woman or man agrees to stay with them for a payment, that may help. Consider this and do what you think best.

If someone visits Maganbhai, he should tell him that I got his letter. How can I write to him now? He should also tell Kakasaheb that I remember all that I have to write about. I will write what I can during the time I get.

You will observe that I send to you many letters addressed to persons outside Ahmedabad. I know that this means double expense and increase in your work. If you wish, I can post such letters directly from here to the persons concerned and save both money and time. I have a faint recollection that I had put this question to you on a previous occasion, too, and that you had replied that they should be forwarded through you. Please let me know what I should do.

You will find with this, on a separate sheet, a talk[1] on Chapter XIV. Since I have started writing, I will, as far as possible, continue the series from week to week.

Today's post includes some useful letters (and slips too). If you get time, read them. I have one limitation, or say a gift. I express certain thoughts only in certain circumstances. Without those circumstances, those thoughts would remain unexpressed. If these scattered reflections are not collected, they are likely to be lost. Not that that would be much of a loss, but, since Mahadev, Kaka and others have collected such reflections, I, too, have somewhat fallen a victim to this temptation. As a matter of fact, however, my ship sails as the wind blows. I have no map of the course with me. How can I have one? Having such a map is contrary to the spirit of *bhakti*. How can one who would dance as God wills choose deliberately a course? It is enough if such a one can give single-minded devotion to the task which falls to his or her lot. But this is mere philosophizing. How does it help? "Live as you like, but realize God somehow, anyhow."

Blessings from

BAPU

[1] Gandhiji, however, forgot to enclose the talk and sent it with the letter dated January 26, 1932; *vide* pp. 40-1. For the series of talks, *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*", 21-2-1932.

[PS.]

There are sixty letters besides this.

Lakshman Giri writes from 96 Harrison Road, Calcutta, and requests that the Giri family should be sent away. I write this for your information. You yourself should reply to him from there. I am not replying.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I

52. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day, January 25, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

I hope you will understand that it is not possible for me to write to each of you separately. Of course, whenever it is necessary, and I get time, I write to some of you individually. But this time, too, I intend to write a joint letter to the women as I used to do formerly.

During these days, when all of us are passing through a testing time, I hope that all of you will derive great consolation from Draupadi's prayer. Really speaking, all of us are now in the same plight as she was. No human being can save our honour, God alone can do that. It is true that He often sends His help through men. But such a man is only God's tool or instrument. This much in regard to the difficult time through which we are passing.

Now a little from my experiences in England. I may say that in England, too, I received from women almost the same love that I have always received from Indian women. Just as you have kept no secret from me, there in England also I came across women who opened their hearts to me. They came from long distances to accompany me in my early morning walks and to talk to me. The moral which I drew from this is that non-violence is a very wide thing. It includes absolute freedom from impure thoughts.

I also saw that Indian women were in no way inferior to European women. Much of their strength lies suppressed and some of it has had no opportunity to reveal itself. Whenever I observed the European women's superiority, I could also see the causes of it. If the same causes begin to operate in our country, the women here also would become like them. However, we should certainly reflect over the superiority which we

observe in European women. We should not feel elated thinking that that strength lies concealed in us; nor should we be complacent on that account. They possess the power of organization and can unite and work very well like the men. They don't think themselves helpless, but fearlessly move about wherever they like. In England, if a woman goes out alone either during day or at night, it is not thought necessary for anybody to accompany her. Nursing in hospitals has become an exclusive province of women, and they do the work very well indeed. The sacrifices made by some women are beyond praise. Muriel Lester who came to stay with us at the Ashram is a daughter of rich parents. Like Mirabehn, she has given away, as a trust to the Ashram founded by her, all her share of the parental wealth. She and her sister Doris have dedicated their all to public service. Doris runs a school for children. She is helped by about ten women teachers who work for a very small pay. Muriel runs the Ashram where I was staying. Day and night the two sisters think only of service. Both have remained unmarried and now they have reached an age when even the thought of marriage would not occur to them. We can see their purity marked on their faces. In Muriel's Ashram no distinction would ever be made between high and low or between whites and non-whites. One may suppose that she could expect some publicity by acting as my hostess. But what shall one say about her having let Tilakam stay at the place? You may ask Tilakam himself how he was looked after there. He went to it as a pauper. I had agreed to pay the expenses on his account. However, Tilakam gave to the Ashram his full services like the others, so that I did not have to pay a single penny on his behalf. Negroes too she admits into her institution, and treats them with the same respect and love. I have many such happy memories of my stay. But I hope that for the present you will be satisfied with what I have given.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

53. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

Silence Day, [January 25, 1932][1]

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

Since I cannot write to each of you separately, I shall try to write a joint letter to you all every week as before. I now intend to write to you about the things I had been hoping to explain to you when I would meet you. It is in God's hands to fulfil the intention. We should live as He may ordain and feel happy in doing so. This is why we sing that *bhajan* by Narasinh Mehta: "Take to heart neither happiness nor suffering; they are ordained for this body from its very birth."

I will now tell you a story. First I wish to tell you about the school run by a lady named Doris. She is the sister of Miss Muriel who came to stay with us at the Ashram. She has dedicated her life to the service of children, and to that end she has been running a beautiful school for them. It has no male teacher. All the teachers are women. The school is a two-storeyed building with a spacious terrace above, a part of which is covered so that when it is raining the children might play or go to bed under the roof. I liked one thing which I saw there. All the children are made to sleep in the school for half an hour in the afternoon, for which purpose they have small folding bedsteads. You should note that these boys and girls are not more than eight years old. The children are made to do all that they can with their own hands. In the games they play the teacher invariably joins them. The teachers also show them how to wash their faces and hands and how to brush their teeth properly. There is not a single activity of the children which is not supervised by a teacher. All the children belong to poor families and pay no fees. Games, physical exercises and handicrafts also are there. These children became as close to me as you had become. They sent me toys as a birthday gift, which I have carefully preserved and brought for you.

[1] This being Gandhiji's first letter to the Ashram children from Yeravda Prison, it is presumed that this was written on the same day as the preceding letter to Ashram women.

But now I don't know when I shall be able to give them to you. This is enough for today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8896. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

54. *LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI*

January 25, 1932

CHI. JAMNADAS,

You came and left without saying much. Now write to me and make the letter as long as you wish. How far are you succeeding in your work? How many pupils does the school have? And how many teachers? Where is Jagannath? Where are his brothers? How is your health?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9361

55. *LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

January 25, 1932

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

You must have got my letter. I have had no reply from you. I write this letter, all the same, so that you may not worry. I am eager to get news about Father and others. I hope you don't worry about things.

Both of us are quite well. My diet is practically the same as it was when I was out of jail.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3424

56. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

January 25, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I don't know whether I shall be able to describe to you all that you want to know.[1]

I didn't know that Dhurandhar had become the King's guest.

I very much enjoyed seeing the paintings in Rome, but what opinion can I give after a visit of two hours? What is my competence to judge? And what is my experience in these matters? I liked some of the pictures very much indeed. If I could spend two or three months there, I would go and see the paintings and sculptures every day and study them attentively. I saw the sculpture of Jesus on the cross. I have already written and told you that it was this that attracted me most.

I didn't feel, however, that the art of that country excelled that of India. The two have developed along different lines. Indian art is entirely a product of the imagination. European art is imitation of Nature. Probably this makes Western art easier to understand. But, maybe, after we have understood it, it keeps us glued to the earth, whereas the more we understand Indian art the more it lifts us above the earth. I have stated these views simply because I must say something to you. I put no great value on them. It is likely that my unconscious partiality for India makes me say this, or my ignorance makes me ride the horse of fancy. But anyone who rides such a horse is sure to fall ultimately.

Even so, if you can learn anything from these views you may. If you have risen beyond such things, leave them aside. Parents can freely tell their children, who know less than they, stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in the manner they know best; I am in a similar position in this matter.

You will be able to see from this that I do take interest in art. But I have renounced, have had to renounce, many such interests. I have relished to my heart's content the joy which everything connected with the search for truth gives me, and I would be ready still to relish it in more of such things. Tasks come unsought to a

[1] The addressee had asked for an account of Gandhiji's visits to places of artistic interest in Rome and elsewhere.

votary of truth. That is why by nature he is equipped to follow the teaching of the third chapter [of the *Gita*]. I believe I had been practising karmayoga even before I had read that chapter.

But I am straying, I am afraid, from the path.

You have done well in putting me questions[1] about the Ashram. Work is given the chief place in the Ashram life, because it is man's duty to do body labour. Anyone who shirks it, eats stolen food. Moreover, the work which we do in the Ashram is as much for service as it is for one's own benefit. We have put the spinning-wheel in the centre of our activities, because for the millions in the country spinning is the only work we can think of as a universal supplementary occupation to agriculture. It subserves moral and economic ends alike.

The Ashram exists not only for the service of the country but, through it, for the service of the world and to help us to attain *moksha*, to see God, through such service.

Not everyone can join the Ashram. It is not an infirmary, not an orphanage. It is meant for men and women who have dedicated themselves to service, to the realization of a spiritual goal. Hence it is not meant for people who cannot do body labour. However, we may admit persons who are filled with the spirit of service but who are disabled in body. Of course we can admit only a small number of such persons. And we certainly cannot ask those who joined the Ashram as regular members but who may have become disabled afterwards, to leave the Ashram. Outwardly, many of our actions in the Ashram may seem inconsistent but they will cease to appear so when examined more deeply. If you do not understand any point in this, you may ask me again. You may also express any other doubts which you may feel.

It was only rarely that I posed for a photograph while in England. I believe I have not violated my vow in doing that.

It is certainly not my wish, nor is it desirable, that everyone who comes close to me should be like me in every respect. That would mean mechanical imitation. If anybody wishes to take from me what may seem good to him, it will help him only if he takes what he can assimilate. In any case, who can prevail upon Sardar to stop taking tea?[2] And may it not be that tea serves as medicine to him? Some persons who are close to me, who are my co-workers, are even meat-eaters! What do you say to that?

[1] The addressee had asked what the ideals of the Ashram were and, quoting instances of apparently contradictory approaches to life, sought Gandhiji's opinion.

[2] The addressee had asked how Vallabhbhai could take tea while staying with Gandhiji in the jail.

Only those with whom tea does not agree or who refrain from it because they have considered how it is grown will never take it. Though Ba lives with me, she does take tea. She takes coffee too. I would even offer them lovingly to her. Why? I know, of course, that your question was good-humoured joking, but some false ideas and a degree of intolerance prevail among us in such matters and it is necessary to get rid of them. I don't know if you have this weakness, but it is desirable that you should know my views on this subject. There is much else in my other letters of this week; if you get an opportunity, read them and ponder over them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10269. Also C.W. 6717. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

57. LETTER TO RAMABEHN C. JOSHI

January 25, 1932

CHI. RAMA[1],

I must write to you. I often remember the tears in your eyes on that day. Is your mind at peace now? How are Vimala[2] and Dhiru[3]? Does the latter volunteer to work for Gangadevi, who looks after him with such kindness? Have Vimala and Dhiru become quiet now?

Tell Chhaganlal that I was glad to get the newspapers and read them. If he gets an opportunity now in jail to learn the *Gita* by heart, he should utilize it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5334

58. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

January 26, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

I got your letter. There are three things you should do to cure weakness and loose motions. Live on curds and fruit only. Fruit may include oranges, *jamun*, pomegranates, *papayas*, pineapple

[1] Wife of Chhaganlal Joshi
[2]&[3] Addressee's children

and grapes. Take hip-baths before eating anything and also sun-baths in the rays of the rising sun. You should take only a small quantity of curds at a time. Divide the total quantity into four meals. Go on reducing the quantity progressively if you find that you are not digesting all that you are eating. Do not be afraid that, if you do so, you will become weaker.

If and when you feel very eager to work, there are many types of work, both light and heavy, in the Ashram. All of them have equal value if done in a spirit of service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 850. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

59. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

Tuesday, January 26, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

The yarn which I spun during my last imprisonment was sent there to be woven into khadi. If it has been woven, please let me know what its count was and whether it was strong enough for weaving or was rather weak.

Where are Ramji and others? How many weavers live there? What quantity of yarn is spun and woven in the Ashram every month? Can you say that the quality of yarn has improved in any degree?

Do you know what happened to the books which I had brought with me from England?

Putting this letter under the pad, I discover that I forgot to enclose the talk on Chapter XIV[1]. I send it today.

Premabehn says in her letter that you have spoiled your health somewhat by eating ground-nuts. I strongly advise you not to eat them. If at all you wish to eat nuts which contain oil, you may eat only almonds. I would not advise you to eat any other nuts. The maximum quantity of almonds which you can eat is five *tolas*. If you are not taking any other nourishing food, five *tolas* of almonds will not be too expensive. The best course for you, of course, seems to be that you should take the diet of milk, fruit and uncooked vegetables which I have suggested to Kusum, provided, that is, you do not wish to eat *rotli*, etc. Alternatively, *rotli*, vegetables, milk or curds and some quantity of un-

[1] *Vide* p. 32.

cooked vegetables will form a perfect diet. If, occasionally, you drop *rotli* and milk, that will certainly help. You can live for two or three days on fruit alone. At that time, you should not eat nuts. Modern researches show that man needs very little of rich foods such as milk, pulses, etc. It has been proved, one may say, that most diseases have their origin in rich, fatty and starchy foods.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8204. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

60. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

January 27, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter. Mirabehn and others came and saw me. As requested by Mahavir in his letter, send the family to Darjeeling and give them money for the expenses there. Tell Valjibhai that he can send the translations[1] to me. I will see if they permit me to return them revised. My compliments to Surendra. He does not seem to have been hurt much.

The rest next week. You must have received the letter[2] which I posted today. I sent with it the talk on Chapter XIV which I had omitted.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. NARANDAS GANDHI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8205. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Of the discourses on the Ashram vows, which Gandhiji wrote weekly in his letters to Satyagraha Ashram during his detention in Yeravda Prison in 1930. The first in the series was written in July 22, 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 40. These were first published in Gujarati under the title *Vratavichar* and later under the title *Mangal Prabhat.*

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

61. A LETTER

January 28, 1932

MY DEAR,

You are right about the repetition of the prayers by some without knowing the meaning. Effort has been often made to remove the defect. But in a place which has a floating population, the task is difficult. A prayerful repetition is itself not a bad thing. It is like music that has no words. The music has its own distinct effect apart from words. This defence is good only where there is no hypocrisy and the mind is properly attuned.

If I am not mistaken the remains of food is not given to the cattle because it is not good for their health. They are scientifically fed. Burial is not waste. The food turns to manure. The real remedy is that there is no waste. We try to live the life of the poor and hence we should take in our dishes no more than we need. I know there are many difficulties.

Yours,

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8920. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

62. A LETTER

January 28, 1932

BHAI,

What further explanation do you want beyond what I have given in my writings on the *Gita*? Thoughts occur only in a *vikari* mind. The word *vikar* should be understood here in a very wide sense. *Vikar* means change of state. Even pure thoughts do not arise in a state of *samadhi*, and yet it is not a state of utter inertness. God does not think, because he is *nirvikar*[1]. Absence of thoughts does not mean a state of inertness, it means pure consciousness. This is a state which cannot be described but can only be experienced. I don't mean to say, however, that I have experienced it. I believe in it through faith. I may even say that I have had a faint glimpse of it.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8907. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Not subject to *vikar*

63. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

January 28, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your letter. I am not surprised at what is happening today. I had expected it all. Much worse will follow yet. Didn't Sudhanva have to jump into a pan of boiling oil to prove his faith? Sita had to enter the flames, and Prahlad was forced to embrace a red-hot pillar. He whose faith in God is perfect has no limit to his endurance. God provides sufficient food alike to the elephant and the ant according to the need of each. There is a verse in the *Gita*[1] which says: "In whatever way men resort to Me, even so do I render to them." This is what it means: "I give to the people in proportion to the faith with which they worship Me." If you draw water from a well with a cup, you will get a cupful and, if you draw with a pitcher, you will draw a pitcherful.

Chanchalbehn has done good work indeed. I am writing to her. Go and give the letter to her or read it out to her. It should not be published.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6: G.S. Gangabehnne, p. 62. Also C.W. 8789. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

64. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN N. KHARE

January 28, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMIBEHN,

Do not forget me altogether. Write to me occasionally. How are you? Why does Mathuri remain weak?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 279. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] IV. 11

[2] *Vide* also p. 56.

65. *LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI*

January 28, 1932

CHI. AMINA,

I got your letter. Noorbanu also gave me news about you yesterday. I am sure that you two will do full honour to the position which Father held. May God grant long life to you both. I do know your courage.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6660. Also C.W. 4305. Courtesy: Hamid Qureshi

66. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH*

January 28, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN,

Do you feel happy there? Can you hear better now? Does anybody stay in the Vidyapith? How is Narahari?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5965. Also C.W. 3282. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

67. *LETTER TO SHAKARIBEHN C. SHAH*

January 28, 1932

CHI. SHAKARIBEHN[1],

No woman need spare me while I am here. When I am outside, anybody writing to me may increase my burden. But while I am here you can make up for your previous [self-restraint]. Do, therefore, write to me. Is your mind at peace now? Why is it that Babu[2] remains weak?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 29

[1] Wife of Chimanlal Shah

[2] Addressee's daughter, Sharda

68. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

January 28, 1932

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

How are you getting along? Write to me in detail.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 422. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

69. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA S. KAMDAR

January 29, 1932

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA,

I hear from Rasik that you gave birth to a child but the baby died after four months. That is what our life is like. All children born do not live, and even those that live will die some day. Need I, therefore, console you? Moreover, the children by the first wife are yours, aren't they? If the baby had lived, you would certainly have had my blessings for it. I would have been happy if you had come to see me. We shall meet now when God wills. Meanwhile, write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If you wish, you may write to me directly.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7468. Also C.W. 4914. Courtesy: Hari-ichchha S. Kamdar

70. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

January 29, 1932

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

I could only look at you and didn't get time to speak even one word to you. Well, I have time enough now to write. You also should now write to me as long as you are free. In which prison is Kamalnayan[1] lodged? How is he? Ask Madalasa[2] and Om[3] to write to me. How do you keep?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

As you know, Sardar is with me. We pass our time quite happily. We eat and sleep and pace up and down.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2894

71. LETTER TO NILKANTH B. MASHRUWALA

January 29, 1932

CHI. NILKANTH,

I got your letter. What is Kishorelal's diet? The copy of *Young India* has come with me here. Most probably *Gandhi Vichar Dohan* also is with me. I cannot revise it from here and return it. Let the thing, therefore, be printed as it is. Are all the prisoners kept together? Request Nathji to visit the Ashram off and on. How is his eczema? How often can you see Kishorelal? Where is Tara[4]? How is she?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Who is Lakhu? I don't remember him.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9419. Courtesy: Nilkanth B. Mashruwala

[1] Addressee's son
[2&3] Addressee's daughters
[4] Sushila Gandhi's younger sister

72. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

January 29, 1932

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I got the letter you wrote from Siwan. I also received subsequently your earlier letter. I hope you get my letters. Tell Swarupraniji[1] that she should not feel worried at all because Swarup[2] and Krishna[3] have left. God protects all his creatures. How is her health? My diet is practically the same as it was when I was out of jail. The weight is 106 pounds. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me. Both of us are quite well. Do you read any newspapers?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3423

73. LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY

January 30, 1932

DEAR DR. BIDHAN,

I have your great and good letter quite worthy of you. I love and accept your correction, and say with you that we are near to each other; and since we are near to each other, let me say that my letter had no complaint behind it. It simply went out as an advice in order to secure what I thought would be a better working of the organization, and I expected you, as a friend, if my advice did not find any response within your breast, to say plainly to me, 'You do not know the situation, and therefore I do not accept your advice.' Of course, your reply said the same thing, but in an unexpectedly different manner, but that is all dead and gone. After having tendered you my apology, I had dismissed the incident from my mind, but you have revived the memory, and now rendered it sacred by your generous letter.

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru's mother
[2] & [3] Vijayalakshmi Pandit and her sister

I am glad of the news you give me about your distinguished patients. It is quite like Baby to have placed her flat at Kamala's disposal.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 18493

74. A LETTER

January 30, 1932

CHI.,

I got your letter. If you wish and if your health permits, you may certainly come. But please don't feel that it is your duty to come. Where one *atman* is united with another, there is little need to express their unity through physical means. I realize daily from experience that we cannot give and receive through physical presence what we can indirectly through the heart.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8921. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

75. A LETTER

January 30, 1932

CHI.,

I got your letter. The Ashram exists in our hearts as much as it does on the bank of the Sabarmati. The Ashram on the bank of the Sabarmati can be seized by the Government or be swept away in the flood or be robbed, but no one can rob or burn the one in our hearts. That is the real Ashram. Live in Bombay with that in your heart, and observe whatever rules your health permits. The principal vows can be observed whatever the condition of one's health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8922. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

76. *LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL*

January 30, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

You have improved your handwriting very much indeed. What about *Gitaji*? Have you learnt by heart all the chapters? Who else has done so? *Lakdi*[1] and *ladki*[2] don't sound very different from each other, so I can say that a *lakdi* is also a *ladki*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4073. Also C.W. 37. Courtesy: Mangala B. Desai

77. *LETTER TO MAHALAKSHMI M. THAKKAR*

January 30, 1932

CHI. MAHALAKSHMI,

I have your letter.

It is probable that the gas trouble is caused by milk. Try the following. Take curds instead of milk, but not more than half a seer at a time. Add ten grains of soda bicarb to the curds. You may take one and a half seers of curds during the whole day. You can then take one and a half seers of dates. But they also should not exceed half a seer at a time. As the dates are likely to have been soiled, you should wash them before eating. There is no harm in mixing them with the curds after washing and taking out their stones. Remember that dates will need time to get softened in curds. In addition, take also the raw vegetables I mentioned earlier, but very little of them. You will certainly feel thirsty between meals. You may then take water with soda bicarb and lemon-juice added to it. This will stop the gas and the body will feel light. Dates never cause gas. Probably it is caused by milk. If the curds cause constipation, take milk instead of curds. If the milk is fresh and cold, you may

[1] A stick

[2] A girl beloved by the family

dates in it also and eat them. They will get soft only if you let them soak for some time. If you eat them soon after putting them in cold milk, you will not find them soft. Dates cannot help you to become fat, but the milk might. One cannot live on dates alone for many days, if one wants to do physical labour. In the letter to Madhavji I mentioned one seer of dates, and this letter is an amendment of that since here I have suggested one and a half seers of curds or milk in place of three seers of milk.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

It is not necessary that you must take the things in the quantities I have mentioned. If you find either of them excessive, you may reduce it. Remember that seer here means 40 *tolas.*

Ask me about anything that is still not clear to you. Why should you refer to Madhavji always as Shriyut and not as Madhavji.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6819

78. *LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS*

January 30, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I could give to you some more reminiscences of Miss Doris's school, about which I wrote to you last week. But I will leave that subject today and write about [Madame] Montessori's school-children. Montessori is an aged lady. She has dedicated her life to children's education. She is an Italian lady. Learn from your teachers where Italy is and how its government is run. Keep the map of Europe before you. In the map it looks like a fat leg which has separated from the rest of the body.

But let us leave that and return to the school of the learned Madame Montessori. The lady happened to be in England, where they were holding a conference of all teachers who followed her method. She invited me to it and explained to me how and what they taught the children. The most important thing was that the children felt no burden of learning as they learnt everything as they played. Secondly, the aim is to develop all the senses and organs of the child, that is, its hands, feet, nose, ears, tongue, skin and the mind, and they have very carefully planned a teach-

ing programme with that aim in view. In the programme very little place is given to memorizing. Music has an important place, and it accompanies physical exercises also. They teach dancing too, and it gives plenty of exercise to the body. The children do most of the things by themselves and learn without effort to concentrate attention. The thing I liked most in their method was that they trained children to observe silence and concentrate. This is how they do it. The children sit with closed eyes, the teacher speaks in a voice no louder than a whisper into one's ear and children strain their ears to hear what she says. As soon as any child hears it, it goes over on its toes and sits by the side of the teacher. Till all the children have done this one after another, everyone is to remain sitting and keep silent. You, too, should try this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

79. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

January 30, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Has the trunk of books which I brought with me arrived there? Does anybody live in the Vidyapith? Does anyone take care of the books or is everything falling into ruin? Many of the monthlies too are worth preserving. It is desirable that there should be one whole-time person to look after the books assisted by two others. If this is not possible, we should not have allowed the library to grow so large. It is the duty of the Vidyapith to make this arrangement. It is not our job. It is because this was not our work that we started the Vidyapith, otherwise we would have turned the Ashram itself into a Vidyapith. The work does not lie within the Ashram's sphere of activities at all. Its work is primarily internal, and the Vidyapith's is primarily external, and so it ought to be. The aims of both are the same but their activities are different. In the Ashram, therefore, we should keep only such books as we require for our purpose. Other books that we may need, we should borrow from the Vidyapith. All this, however, when we settle down again to our normal activities. Just now everything is being swept away by a flood, and that is all to the good. When the flood has subsided, don't we have a wide expanse of water, clear as crystal?

I remember the Nag Panchami festival, and I adhere to the reply which I gave on that occasion. Haven't I compared the breaking of heads to the explosion of crackers? Anyone who knows the nature of the *atman* will believe that to be literally so. If the *atman* never perishes, what does it matter that the houses it inhabits perish or that the garments which it puts on wear out and decay? Moreover, the *atman* is eternally perfect and so it can never lack a house to inhabit. If we but know the truth, it needs none. But all this is true only with reference to oneself. So long, therefore, as our own heads are being broken, we should think that crackers are exploding. Don't ask me how the *atman* can make a distinction between one's own and another's. So long as the body endures, we must assume this distinction in all our actions. As we die to ourselves, the distinction between one's own and another's loses its force for us, but so long as we go on killing others, the distinction becomes stronger. As the children gradually understand this truth, they too, like the young men in the Ashram, will become wise. But that requires patience on our part. In this connection, read my letter[1] to the children.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10270. Also C.W. 6718. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

80. *LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL*

January 30, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

Why don't you write to me? How are you? In what form are you? With whom have you made friends? Which of them do you like most? Where do you live?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9420. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

81. *LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN*

January 30, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

I wish to write to you today about a lady. Her name is Maude Royden. She is an old woman. She has remained unmarried. She was the first woman in England to obtain the highest degree in theology. Besides her, there has been only one other woman who has obtained that degree. I am saying this not to show that theology is a very difficult subject, though it certainly is that. My point is that few women have been attracted to it. It does not help one to acquire status or importance in the world. Not only has Maude Royden studied the subject so deeply, but she has also dedicated her life to the service of the poor. Like Miss Muriel, she too makes no distinction between whites and non-whites. Through her own efforts she got a church built, which gives shelter to the poor and in which they hold their meetings. These services have brought the lady great honour. People valued her learning very little, but her services to the poor have made the lady very famous. She is also a powerful speaker, and in her character she is above all reproach. She relies on herself in all her activities and does not regard herself a weak and helpless woman. She has travelled widely and gathered much experience. Perhaps she may even come here to help us in our work. The main question before her will be whether she can be free from her present work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

82. A LETTER

January 30, 1932

CHI.,

Ashram inmates should in no case be invited to a wedding celebration; how can people aspiring to observe *brahmacharya* have anything to do with weddings? Therefore you must keep yourself away in every respect from that wedding. Be firm in your reply.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8923. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

83. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

January 31, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

It seems but yesterday that you all came.

I am glad you are coming in such close touch with Radha. She has in her the making of a good woman. You tell me you are not able to keep your evening prayer hours. If so, you should shift the hour and keep it regularly, just giving a few seconds to the thought at the Ashram prayer time. This is merely by way of suggestion. You know best how to manage the thing.

Please tell Nargisbehn to write to me and tell me all about the other three sisters.

We are still keeping well. I still need as much sleep as I can get or would take.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6213. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9679

84. LETTER TO K. RAMACHANDRA

January 31, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am sorry for the complication that has arisen there with reference to the temple-entry question. I have no doubt whatsoever that whilst a non-Hindu may sympathize with the reform movement, he cannot and ought not to take part in any direct action.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. RAMACHANDRA
SRI WICKRAMA
WELLAWATTE
COLOMBO

From a microfilm: S.N. 18494

85. LETTER TO GOPALA MENON

January 31, 1932

MY DEAR GOPALA MENON,

I have your letter of the 26th instant. Now that the fast is off for the time being, I shall watch what work Kerala is going to put in.

The taking of signatures to the memorial is, I hope, proceeding apace. You should report the number taken from day to day. You must have fixed a time limit.

The work of educating public opinion should continue side by side with constructive work amongst the Harijans.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 18495

86. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Night, January 28/February 1, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I feel that my right hand will not give good service for long, and so I intend to use both hands. It will take more time, of course. But I should not want time here. I will give less time to other work. I have written a letter to Chanchalbehn whose son Visu died the other day. That letter should not be published or talked about. My actions are governed by mutual trust. I do nothing without the knowledge of the authorities. I will talk to them about this letter. There seems nothing wrong to me in writing a letter of condolence. But it would be wrong if such a letter were published. That would be propaganda. That is why I have asked Gangabehn[1] to show that letter to Chanchalbehn and then bring it back with her. No letter of mine is intended for publication in newspapers. There is nothing wrong, though, in your publishing in the "Ashram Samachar" extracts from them containing moral discussions or news about our health.

Parnerkar does not seem to have calmed down. I believe that the problem before him is certainly a moral one. Call him to you and comfort him. Ultimately, of course, you will do what you think best.

I don't look upon the orchard as a white elephant. It is a useful investment. The money that is spent on it will not, in the long run, have been wasted. An orchard always increases the value of the land, helps the soil to retain moisture and cools the air. This is a universal experience. The choice of trees to be planted may of course require thinking. I have only stated a general principle. Obtain Prof. Trivedi's opinion. He has seen the plot of land. Send him a list of the plants and the number of each. Ask him if he can throw some light. Write also to Prof. Higginbottom. Pattanisaheb must have employed a curator. You may seek his assistance, too. It is possible, however, that under the present pressure of work, you will not get time to think about all this. If that is so, ignore my suggestions. Totaramji is everybody to us and we should be content with what he can do.

[1] *Vide* p. 43.

Where is Somabhai? And Bhansali? Have you any news of Lilabehn? How is Hasmukhram?

Afternoon, January 29, 1932

I got your second letter today. Do not send by post the leather for repairing the soles of sandals. Anyone who may come to see us may bring it along with him. I see great risk in keeping . . .[1] alone with . . .[2] . She may have exaggerated in her letter, but . . . is not responsible for himself. How can one say when he will have a fit of madness? If you keep . . . with him, a responsible person should stay with them. If . . . [3] can control . . ., he may stay with them. Or somebody else. The position would have been different if . . . had strength of her own to stay with . . . . Moreover, . . . is a slave of passion. If, under the urge of passion, he assaults . . . and she becomes pregnant, that too would be a painful matter. Think over all this and do what you think best. I have written this because I know that you can bear the burden of every kind of responsibility.

Do they permit food to be supplied to Abbas Saheb from outside? Do we supply any? How is Mridula's condition? Is the newspaper report about Ranchhodbhai correct?

I am writing to both Budhabhai and Parvati. Is Nanibehn there?

Night, February 1, 1932

Anyone who proposes to come and see me should first see Dahyabhai or know from him if he has any message to send. This should be done so that both may not come here and Dahyabhai may be able to send a message if he wishes to.

There are 57 letters this time, not counting yours and the talk on the *Gita*.

Blessings from
BAPU[4]

At night, February 1, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Please ask the women and find out whether they understand the purport of the accompanying summary and let me know. On further reflection I see that I should make a third attempt and

[1], [2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

[4] For the text of the *Gita* discourse (Ch. xv) which followed, *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*", 21-2-1932.

give a still easier summary. I do not know whether I shall be able to do that, but it may help me if I see some criticism of what I am about to complete.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8206. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

87. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

Silence Day [January-February, 1932][1]

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

How are you? Have you kept up your courage? How is Madalasa? Do not worry about Kamalnayan. Haven't you learnt from Vinoba's *Talks on the Gita* that one should not worry about anything?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 83

88. LETTER TO MARCHIONESS CARLA VITELLESCHI

February 2, 1932

DEAR CARLA,

I got your letter. Yes, you are right. Had I not felt for you as for my own daughter, I would not have spoken to you as strongly as I did that morning. I am now glad of the step you have taken. I am quite sure that your place is by your husband's side. You must shake off your uncertainty and wavering nature.

You may write whenever you feel like it.

May God give you light and peace.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[1] As given in the source

[PS.]

Not remembering your full name I am addressing the envelope by your maiden name.

MADAM CARLA
HOTEL DES INGENIEURS
52 RUE BLANCHE
PARIS-MONTMARTRE, FRANCE

From a photostat: G.N. 2511

89. *LETTER TO PREMLILA THACKERSEY*

February 2, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

There is a stream of gifts from you. I understand the love behind them. But have mercy on me. Both of us get here all that we want. The money which they spend on us here is also people's money. I will not hesitate to ask you for anything that I need. I sent a message through . . .[1] requesting you not to go on sending fruits, etc. But parcels continue, and that is why this letter. I ate for many days the honey which you had given me for the voyage. It was excellent.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

LADY VITHALDAS THACKERSEY
YERAVDA HILL

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4821. Courtesy: Premlila Thackersey

90. *LETTER TO P. G. MATHEW*

February 3, 1932

MY DEAR MATHEW,

Your letter. You are as shy as ever I see. Do shake it off and write freely.

I am glad you are looking after Tilak and took charge also of Bharatan.

[1] Omission as in the source

You must try and write a few lines to me in Hindi. Parsuram tells me you have made progress.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1548

91. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

February 3, 1932

BHAI VALJI,

No one in the Ashram can keep a parrot in a cage.

If someone happens to do it, the manager will free the parrot which is bound to fly away once it gets an opportunity.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 7418. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

92. A LETTER

February 3, 1932

BHAI,

Whatever you do, do it not only with truth and ahimsa but in the spirit of surrendering all to God and of pure service.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8932. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

93. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Unrevised *February 4, 1932*

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. I propose to post this directly. The account Damodardas gave me of your health disturbed me. He tells me, and your letter confirms that you are working at feverish heat.[1] You ought to slow down. You can't keep up till

[1] "I was busy collecting all the authentic news I could regarding the civil disobedience movement. This I selected and edited and sent abroad in cyclostyled copies."—Mirabehn

midnight always and get up at 4 a.m. If work till midnight is a necessity, you should rest fully immediately after prayer.[1]

And if a weekly visit to Yeravda will soothe your nerves, you must come every week. I have put no embargo. I simply pointed out my own feeling in the matter. A prisoner is a prisoner. As it is, the authorities allow weekly visits and I can as yet see no reason not to avail myself of the permission. But it is at best a precarious privilege not worth making much of. Self-control is the best thing for a prisoner and his friends and dear ones. But self-control to be self-control must brace one up. It becomes mechanical or superimposed when it unnerves or saddens one. You will come sparingly only if you see the beauty of self-restraint and having seen it, exercise it naturally. If it depresses you, know that the effort is strained and unnatural for you. In that case, you should come without the slightest hesitation.

I have gained 1 lb. in weight. It is now 107 lb. Vallabhbhai is steady at 144½ lb. Honey will come in useful.

I had a brief note from the Privats.

Who are the ladies in the household now?

My love to Nargisbehn, Jalbhai and Kamala. Is Kamala not going to Panchgani?

Do not expect another letter from me through the Ashram post.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6214. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9680

94. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

February 4, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA[2],

There are indeed some persons who shed tears when they are happy and smile when they suffer. Our effort should be not to shed tears or smile in either condition.

On what subjects have you written compositions? Which poems do you like best in the text for the seventh form?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9463

[1] "4 a.m. was the usual prayer time."—Mirabehn

[2] Mahadev Desai's step-sister

95. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

February 5, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

After all I have an excuse for writing to you again.

Do you know what happened to the toys that Doris's children had sent me and which I had asked you to keep for our children? If you know where they are and if they can be easily traced, let the children have them.

Another thing is about the case containing books. Do you know if Pyarelal or Mahadev sent the case to the Ashram or the Vidyapith? Perhaps Manilal knows. If you have no time to think of this, much less to attend to it, do not bother.

I hope you got my letter[1] directly that I wrote to you yesterday. This though being written today (Friday) will be posted only on Tuesday.

Remember, please, that you will share with the Ashram the letters. I may write to you directly.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6215. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9681

96. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

February 5, 1932

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI[2],

I observe that you have over two hundred civil resistance prisoners in the extension. Many of these are intimate co-workers. I knew that you had already several from Poona but as they were important public men, I did not ask for meeting them. But with regard to the large number now admitted, an occasional meeting with them is a human want I may not resist. Exactly the same question occurred last year and after talks with Major Martin and then Major Doyle, permission was given to me to see these prisoners occasionally and in small batches of two or three. I repeat the request and I hope that the authorities will have

[1] *Vide* pp. 60-1.

[2] Superintendent, Yeravda Central Prison

no objection to my seeing these fellow-prisoners and workers, subject of course to the same restrictions as last year.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5131

97. LETTER TO ABBAS

February 5, 1932

CHI. ABBAS,

I got your letter. Your description of a bamboo spinning-wheel is very fine. The wheel seems very cheap. Personally, I find the portable Gandiva[1] very convenient and easy to work. Has your speed of spinning improved appreciably? I understand what you say about carding. Has any improvement been effected in the ginning machine? What is the highest count of the yarn from which we can weave khadi now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6306

98. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

February 5, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I got the letter written by Karu on behalf of you all.

By now you ought to have acquired a sense of duty. You ought to follow all the rules laid down for you. No one should resign the responsibility which he has undertaken. The authority going with it should be for us a means for doing greater service and learning greater self-control, and, therefore, no one should resign his post of service in a hurry. The atonements fixed by you for a breach of the various rules are good. See that you now stick to them.

I will complete today the description of Miss Doris's school by telling you something which I had left out in my previous letter[2]. Once the children had arranged a social gathering. In

[1] A type of spinning-wheel
[2] *Vide* pp. 35-6.

England it is common for people to meet and have tea with something to eat. At this gathering there was an exhibition of things made by the children. The children were to play the games for the guests to see and were to serve tea to the gathering. And they did all this without any confusion and without the least noise. The items displayed included dances, physical exercises and some dramatic pieces. It was a very fine sight to watch these small children serving tea to the whole gathering. Remember that all these children were under eight years of age. It was no small thing for them to go round with tea-cups and bread, etc., in a tray and serve guests. And I did not notice any child spilling anything. Excellent also were their drawings, their sewing and knitting work, etc. They had made an album for me, which I have of course brought for you. But all these things remain with me. One of you should write a letter to these children. He may write it in Gujarati or in Hindi, and somebody may translate it for you into English and you may send the original letter together with the translation.

The Address is:
C/o Miss Doris Lester
Children's House
London East

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8927. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

99. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

February 5, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

Only a few of you are now left there. But there is an ebb and flow in all things in the world. Mother *Gita* teaches us to remain unaffected by rise and fall, sunshine and cold, or happiness and misery. We are at present getting an object-lesson in the Mother's teaching. If all of you learn it well, our trust in the *Gita* will have borne fruit.

I have observed that in certain respects people in Europe act according to the teaching of the *Gita* without knowing it. Just now I remember only one thing, and I will describe it to you. Whenever I went out of London I used to put up with friends,

who may be said to be well-to-do. I saw that the servants at their places lived not as servants but as members of the family. They did not put an excessive burden of work on the servants, but worked side by side with them. If anybody had to get up early in the morning, he would not disturb the servant from his sleep but attend to the work himself. At several places I found the servants to have been with the family for many years. In almost every family they introduced me to their servants. Their love of cleanliness was wonderful. On seeing all this, my respect for the friends increased very much. Is it any wonder that these servants should be well paid? I at any rate feel that we ought to admit that we have not reached this level in our relations with our servants. Don't you agree? This is the yoga of cultivating equality. Arjuna told the Lord how difficult it was, and He replied that, though difficult, it could be learnt through patient effort and cultivation of disinterestedness. We should try and learn it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8928. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

100. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

February 5, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

I got your letter. I see that you are devoting your time to good work. Write to me regularly from wherever you may be. If God protects even ants, surely He will not leave us unprotected. He is the Creator, the Destroyer and the Preserver. That is why He preserves even while destroying.

I have nothing particular to say about ourselves. We eat and walk and sleep, that goes without saying. In between we read, spin, etc.

Wherever you may be, do not forget to pray daily.

If you can recite no other prayer, you can do at least the *Ramadhun*.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 63. Also C.W. 8790. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

101. A LETTER

February 5, 1932

CHI.,

It seems, you are destined to remain delicate all your life. That certainly ought not to be. I see that you have given up worrying about your health. From one point of view, it is good. But giving up worrying should not mean that you should make no attempt to improve it. Daily doses of medicines are not the right remedy. Change of diet and exercise are bound to cure constipation. Which food and which exercises will suit you is for you to find out.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8930. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

102. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

February 5, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Sardar has really given up tea. I knew that he had given up the morning tea. He used to have a cup at ten. Now he has given up that too. I knew this after he had done so. I didn't say a single word to him. He has acted of his own free will.

It was not my intention to state that I had sent English toys for the children. If that is what I did, I made a slip. What I wished to say was that I had brought some toys. Now I don't know when I would be able to give them. They were in Mirabehn's custody. Perhaps she will remember where they are kept.

The books were in a trunk. Either Mirabehn or Pyarelal would know about them. If you lift and feel the weight of the trunk which has not been opened, you will know whether it contains books or something else. Perhaps Mahadev knows about it.

This is what is meant by seeming inconsistency. An apparent inconsistency either in my life or in the affairs of the Ashram can be explained. There is only an appearance of inconsistency in

the action of a person who wraps up his body in winter and keeps it uncovered in summer. He obeys the same principle both when he covers the body and when he leaves it uncovered. Many such seeming inconsistencies can be properly explained. Other inconsistencies are such in fact. They are due to my or Ashram's weaknesses. They should be regarded as moral deficiencies and every effort should be made to overcome them. Which inconsistencies are really such and which are only apparent ones can be decided only when we examine all of them one by one. If you wish to ask me about any inconsistencies which you may have noticed, please do.

No one hates another without a cause. Hence, non-violence lies in loving a person, feeling compassion for him and serving him even when he has given us cause for hating him. There is no non-violence in loving a person who loves us; that is but the law of the world. Non-violence may be described as making a gift. Giving love in return for love is no more than doing one's duty.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10271. Also C.W. 6719. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

103. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

February 5, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

I should pull your nose from here for having spent so many days before finding time to write to me. Here, take it. Just now it is eight o'clock at night on Friday. Write to me and tell me whether you felt the nose pulled. For you, the handwriting in your letter was good. Make it still better. How far have you come up in the *Gita*?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3978

104. LETTER TO RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

February 6, 1932

DEAR RAMANANDA BABU,

Many thanks for *The Modern Review*.[1] Do please send me *The Golden Book of Tagore*. It will be allowed. My love to Gurudev when you meet him.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE
"[THE] MODERN REVIEW"
UPPER CIRCULAR ROAD, CALCUTTA

From the original: C.W. 9501. Courtesy: Santa Devi

105. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

February 6, 1932

DEAR MARY[2],

I was delighted to hear from you. Yes, I am permitted to write and receive non-political letters such as yours is.

The paper[3] on which you wrote your letter is nothing new to me. Ahmedabad used to be the home of such paper. It is prepared there even now but in very small quantities. There are several such places in India.

The second chapter of the *Gita* has presented difficulties to many. I would commend to your attention my introduction[4] to the *Gita*. I have dealt with the difficulty in that introduction. If you have not read it, get a copy from the Ashram. It was published in *Young India*. In the first instance, forget that God

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Ramanada Chatterjee", p. 18.

[2] Of Mission Boarding School near Hyderabad; popularly known as Marybehn, she became interested in Gandhiji's speeches and writings during her furlough in England in 1931 at the time of Round Table Conference; she became acquainted with Gandhiji on board s.s. *Pilsna* while returning to India.

[3] Hand-made

[4] *Vide* Vol. XLI, pp. 90-101.

is speaking through the *Gita*. God never speaks save through defective human agency. In the second instance, it is not to be treated as a historical book. Thirdly, it was written by him in whose time war was not taboo and was not considered inconsistent with ahimsa, just as even now generally speaking, killing of animals for food or in self-protection is not considered inconsistent with ahimsa, though in point of fact it is. The author of the *Gita* therefore chose for driving his lesson home an illustration which we are entitled to consider as defective. Personally I have no difficulty in understanding the second chapter. The central teaching of the *Gita* is in Biblical language 'Be careful for nothing'. Results are not for us to control. Having known the path of duty it must be pursued in total disregard of consequence. Arjuna's reasoning was defective and arose from attachment to earthly ties. He was not averse to war, he was averse to fighting kinsmen. The religious answer to this attachment would be, there is no kinsman and no-kinsman[1]. All are—the whole creation is—kinsmen or no one is. If therefore it is lawful to wage war at all, it makes no difference whether it is kinsmen who are concerned or strangers. But this physical, outward war is merely a shadow of the war that is going on within—between God and Satan, forces of evil and good. And do we not always have difficult and delicate problems of conscience arising within us? The *Gita* says, "Surrender all to God, He will take care of you and your doubts; do not vex yourself about anything but simply perform the service that comes to you in the name of and for the sake of God. Cultivate uttermost selflessness and all will be well." The result of this selfless detachment must be uttermost truth and non-violence. Thus[2] read, the second chapter instead of being a hindrance becomes, in my opinion, a help. If this does not satisfy you and you will pursue the subject further, pray do not hesitate to write.

We are keeping the early morning hours[3]. I mean Sardar Vallabhbhai and I.

I am glad you liked your brief stay at the Ashram. Of course you will go there, whenever you feel like it.

Thanks for the offer of books. I have a fair stock and friends and strangers continue to send books which they think I should

[1] Perhaps a slip for 'non-kinsman'

[2] The source has "This".

[3] Of prayer

read. Even apart from the *Gita* difficulty, do write whenever you feel like it.[1]

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5981. Also C.W. 3309. Courtesy: Mary Barr

106. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

February 6, 1932

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

You came and met me but we could not talk. I had been worrying about Venilal, so I had gone to see him once accompanied by Ba. How is he now? Write to me in detail. Where is Umiya[2], and how is she? How are the other girls? How are your relations with Kasumbi[3]? Do write to me about how your work is going on.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./III

107. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

February 6, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I suppose the broken point of the thorn has come out now. Try and get over the mistakes which you make when reciting the *Gita* verses. Do you know the meaning of the verses? Have you learnt any Sanskrit?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4074. Also C.W. 38. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

[1] In her book, *Bapu—Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*, Mary Barr explains: "I replied to the above letter and after that there was a long pause without anything from him. I . . . felt sure that he would have replied if he had received my letter. So I wrote again, a mere postcard asking if he had my second letter. His answer was equally brief and open." *Vide* p. 73.

[2] Addressee's daughter

[3] Addressee's wife, Kasumba

108. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

February 6, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I certainly like your getting up early in the morning, but a girl of weak health like you must be free to sleep whenever she wants to. You should do only as much as you can without getting tired or bored.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 261. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

109. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

February 6, 1932

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

I got your letter. One must never forget prayer. As the body craves for food when it is hungry and does not forget about it, so the soul should yearn to pray. The prayer may consist of nothing more than Ramanama, but one ought not to forget it in any circumstances. To the extent that you forget it occasionally, to that extent it is an external thing to you. Prayer must become so intimately a part of one's being that at last one's every breath is accompanied by Ramanama. As an eyelid goes on doing its work, one will go on repeating Rama's name with every breath.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9507. Also C.W. 423. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

110. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

February 6, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

If a boy or girl does not know what to write, he or she must be stupid. Surely, you are not stupid, are you? If you even describe the events of the day on which you write, you can fill the whole letter. Try this when you reply to this. You will have enough material to write about.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5763. Also C.W. 2986. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

111. *LETTER TO RAMJI G. BADHIA*

February 6, 1932

BHAISHRI RAMJI,

Your letter made me very happy. Your decision to follow Shankerlal's advice is certainly very good. I expect much from you. I felt relieved to know that Jivanlal's health was all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./III

112. *LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI*

February 6, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

I cannot answer from here your question about foreign cloth, for it is a political subject. You may, therefore, ask Narandasbhai about it, and if you are not satisfied by his answer we shall discuss the question when we meet.

Tell Mahadev that he cannot afford to lose weight in this manner. One may eat the food that [one's body][1] requires. What does Mahadev read at present?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9464

113. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

[After *February 6, 1932*][2]

I got yours today. I was wondering what had happened to you. I did not receive your letter in reply to mine. Do write again and repeat your questions. I think I shall receive it safely. We are all doing well, engaged in various studies and spinning. We have more books than we can cope with. Love from us all.

BAPU

Bapu—Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi, p. 15

114. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

February 7, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I was glad to get your letter. Of course I make many mistakes. Be patient. Leave off correcting when you get tired of doing so. I will try to write every week. Having started the practice, I will not give it up. May God grant a long life to my teacher. Tell Father that both of us remember him several times during the day. Tell him that he must come out of the jail palace a young man. It is a good thing that Ravishankar is there to look after him. Blessings from me to Hamida and other girls and women.[3]

I hope this much will be enough for today. I should not trouble you too much. If I do not learn Urdu quite well, the fault will be my teacher's. The poor pupil is helpless.

To Mother many many salaams, *vandematarams* and love from us both, to Sohaila blessings, to the baby kisses and to you a slap.

1. Some words are missing here in the source.
2. *Vide* footnote 1, p. 70.
3. Up to this the letter is in Urdu.

Do not think about your disease. Why should one who has fallen in love with God, worry about disease or anything else? Do you know the *bhajan*, "I will go dance now, singing praises of God"? I heard it once from that lawyer-daughter of Uma Nehru. She is quite a good singer. But why speak of *bhajans* to you? You are yourself a veritable mine of them.

Many blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9637

115. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Wednesday, February 3/8, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your packet just this evening.

Lady Vithaldas, Bhai Trivedi, Vidya Hingorani and Damodar came in the afternoon and saw me. I got the leather for the sandals. I have heard that Ramdas, Chhaganlal, Surendra, Somabhai and others, in all 190 persons, have arrived here. Most probably some of them will see us.

For your scabies, you should eat green leaves and tomatoes. Baths with [potassium] permanganate will certainly help.

At the bottom of the letter from C.P. Scott's son you write that you have sent by book post a biography of the late Scott. The book does not seem to have been received here. If you remember to have sent it, write to me again so that I may inquire further.

You have stated in the "Ashram Samachar" that I spin 500 rounds in two days. I spin, not 500 rounds, but 500 yards, in two days. I spin 375 rounds in two days and it is my ambition to spin as many in one day. But I do not think I shall be able to fulfil it as quickly as I had hoped.

Night, February 6, 1932

I had a letter from Tilakam. The food does not seem to have agreed with him. Read my letter to him, and if he agrees, carry out my suggestions. Pulses do not agree with people who are used to meat. If they start with milk, they experience no difficulty. They ordinarily eat *rotli*, etc., even with meat. As a substitute for meat, they generally take pulses, but a stomach used to meat cannot digest pulses. In any case such persons must

not eat any kind of nuts such as ground-nuts, etc. Milk and curds are but pure forms of non-vegetarian food.

February 8, 1932

You will find with this an article on the subject of the existence of God. It is a translation of a portion of an article published in *Young India*.[1] I had read that portion[2] for a gramophone record. The record is on sale now. Anand[3] heard it. He took down the extract and sent a copy to me for translation. The Hindi article mentioned above is a translation of that extract. The translation should not be published now. Anand wants the Hindi translation to help him to make a Sindhi translation. Send it to him and ask him not to publish it just now. The inmates of the Ashram can read it. You may even publish it in the *Ashram Patrika*. If you do, publish it as an original article. Let Parasram correct its Hindi. I leave it to you to decide whether or not you should publish it in the *Patrika*. If your publishing it is likely to be misconstrued or if someone is likely to reproduce the article elsewhere, drop the idea. It will be enough if the inmates of the Ashram who are there read it, think over it and understand its meaning.

I read in the papers news about a few things having been seized from the Ashram. I expect I shall get more details from you.

I have some free time today and so I wish to describe a few details of the routine here.

Both of us get up at 3.40. After brushing, we pray. After that, we take warm water with honey and lemon-juice and then read till the stroke of five. From five to six, we walk. At six, if I feel the call of nature I answer it, and then sleep for about 20 minutes. I get up at 6.45, when the bell for opening the cells is given, and read up to seven. The Sardar, after answering the call of nature, walks about and sits down to breakfast when milk is brought. As he eats the breakfast, he reads from the newspaper, which has arrived by then. During the day, I read, write and spin. In between I take a nap twice. The Sardar walks about much longer than I do. He generally reads from the newspapers which are supplied to us. I have two meals a day. The Sardar occasionally eats salad or something else like that at twelve. I again take warm water and honey at that time. When

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXVII, pp. 347-50.

[2] On October 17, 1931; *vide* Vol. XLVIII, p. 460.

[3] Anand Hingorani, who has since published its Sindhi version under the title "*Iswara Ahe? Ha, Ahe.*"

the honey is exhausted, I add jaggery and lemon-juice. I once happened to remark that Mirabehn or Pyarelal used to prepare fruit for me to eat. Since then the Sardar has monopolized that duty. It is he who prepares dates and tomatoes for me and does it with great love. I have accepted this loving service without the slightest hesitation. Having mentioned the service rendered by Mirabehn and Pyarelal, it would be a useless attempt on my part to decline the Sardar's help. He takes milk and bread in the morning. At four in the afternoon, he takes bread, curds and some vegetables and, generally salad. I used to take milk in the morning, with dates, tomatoes and, from the fruit sent by Lady Thackersey or Prof. Trivedi, some oranges, *chikus*, etc. At present, I eat dates and tomatoes and, in the morning, take half a pound of milk, and in the evening the same quantity of curds. But I see that I shall have to reduce the quantity of milk still further. My health is good, of course. Do you know that my weight has increased? I see that now I do not need very nourishing food, especially when I enjoy solitude and peace of mind. This was my experience last year. While in jail, I could live without milk and maintain my weight. After my release, I lost weight in a short time for want of milk and, therefore, resumed it. In England, it was only with that that I could keep up my strength. Here I may not perhaps need milk. On the contrary milk may even do me harm. Of course I will do no violence to my body. My aversion to milk remains. But I will give the body what it requires. Let no one, therefore, worry after reading this. I will also mention some other work which the Sardar does. It is he who trims the envelope which you send and prepares it [for use again]. There are many such happy details which I can mention. But are not these enough? Just as we walk about between five and six in the morning, so do we again in the evening. Between six and seven, I read. Meanwhile, the Sardar prepares dates, babul sticks for brushing teeth, etc., for me and then joins me in the cell. At seven, the prayers begin. After prayers, reading and writing again, till 8.30. By nine, we are in bed. Both of us sleep in the open. From among newspapers, we get *The Times [of India]*, *The [Bombay] Chronicle*, *The Tribune*, *The Leader*, and *The Hindu*. From among weeklies, we get *Social Reformer*, and from among monthlies, *The Modern Review*. As for books, I get some from outside and I have brought some with me. They supply enough fare to both of us.

I have read the following books so far: Durant's [*The Case for*] *India*, Crozier's *A Word to Gandhi*, Brailsford's [*Rebel*] *India*, Al Haj

Salmin's *Imam Hussain* and *Khalifa Ally*, Samuel Hoare's *Fourth Seal*, R. MacDonald's travelogue, *Survey of Matar Taluka*[1], Ramanathan's *Speech on Khadi*, Will Hayes' *Essence of Hinduism*[2], Ruskin's *St. George's Guild*, Shah's *Federal Finance*, Rothenstein's *Ruin of Egypt*, Hayes' *The Book of the Cow*, A. E's. *Candle of Vision*, Kinley's *Money*, and *Shankh ane Kodi* (Gujarati). I am now reading the biography of Munshi Zaka Ullah written by Andrews and Shah's book, *Sixty Years of Economic Administration of India*. The Sardar has read Hoare's and MacDonald's books and is now reading the book on Egypt. He gives plenty of time to newspapers and, in addition to the two hours which he gives to walking, as I have mentioned, he must certainly be spending two hours more in walking at other times.

Besides this, there are 36 letters.

Blessings from
BAPU[3]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8207. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

116. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

February 8, 1932

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I have your letter. I was wondering how you were doing. I was therefore glad to hear from you. I may not say more beyond sending my love. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me and we are both keeping well.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

MISS AGATHA HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
LONDON S.W. 11

From a photostat: G.N. 1450

[1] By J. C. Kumarappa

[2] Among the list of books given at the end of "Diary, 1932" (*vide* Vol. LII), the name appears as "Hayes' *Indian Bibles*".

[3] For the text of the *Gita* discourse (Ch. XVI) which followed, *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*", pp. 143-4.

117. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

February 8, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I have two letters from you lying before me. I now understand the riddle of *nama hasude* [*sic*]. It is a good way Narayanrao has found for honouring himself. It is not for nothing that he is a Raosaheb.

Whom did Gajanan ask? No responsible person here knows about the matter. Let me know the date and the hour too. I waited for him very long.

I do not remember whether or not I had before me the *mantra*, *Hiranmayena*[1], etc., when it occurred to me that "Truth is God". When such things occur to me, they spring straight from the heart as if they were original intuitions. For me, these truths have the certainty of personal experience.

If Gajanan is hereabouts, he may still accompany somebody who may be coming to see me. I have referred to Narayan's visit in the general letter.

I hope there is no hurry about the *Bhajanavali*. I wish to offer some suggestions.

Do you think that Rambhau has made good progress? Who are taking music lessons with interest at present?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 226. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

118. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM D. SARAIYA

February 10, 1932

CHI. KAKU,

I got your letter written in a beautiful hand. You have plenty of things to write about. Even if you give an account of what you did during the last year, you will have enough material. You should regard spinning as *yajna* and do it regularly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2807. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

[1] *Isopanishad*, 15; *vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 390.

119. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

February 10, 1932

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I got the packet sent by you. I will look into the translation at least, as and when I get time and let you know when I finish it. I have already replied[1] to your previous letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7419. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

120. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

February 10, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

You get five marks for your handwriting. You will get eight if you leave space between the words and use a good pen. Why does man have no root? A man carries his root wherever he goes. A tree has its root under the ground because it comes out of the ground. Man is born from his mother's body, and his root also comes out with him at the time of his birth. One may say that the navel is his root. If this is not clear to you, show this letter to Premabehn and ask her to explain its meaning to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5764. Also C.W. 2987. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

[1] *Vide* p. 60.

121. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

February 10, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I got Barve's book. I will dip into it when I get time.

Your explanation about the first doubt is quite correct. I have felt that that is the implication of Chapter XVII. Ultimately one has to rely on faith. We see again and again that what seems to be the truth to one does not often appear so to others. However, to follow truth as one sees it is like walking on the razor's edge. Anyone who tries to do so ought to remain wide awake and rigidly follow all the rules and restrictions. The lazy, the licentious, and the hypocrites can claim no right to act according to their view of truth. That privilege belongs only to the *sadhak*, the seeker after truth.

As for the second doubt, I think that the *sadhak* will not trouble himself with deciding what is and what is not for general good. He would say that he was not interested in the question, and that universal good lay in truth since truth was the supreme Being. While all other names of God suggested only one aspect of His, truth signified His perfect essence, so that a person who opposed truth could never accomplish anybody's good. Truth necessitates harmony of thought, speech and act. That is, one must follow truth as one sees it and always be faithful to it in thought, speech and action. But a false notion is widely prevalent among us. We are not always bound to answer a question asked by anyone. There is no violation of truth in refraining from giving an answer. To keep silent when it is one's duty to reply to a question amounts to telling a lie. For example, if my father asked me whether I had stolen a piece of gold, I would be bound to answer the question. However, if even my father asked me whether somebody had stolen a thing, I would not be bound to answer. If, therefore, I did not reply, I would not be telling a lie. I remember the chapter in *Gitarahasya*[1]. I did not agree with the suggestion in it. If you tell a lie under force of circumstances, you are certainly not telling the truth. There never can be an occasion when one must tell a lie. If there can be such an occasion, then it would follow that the principle of following truth in

[1] A commentary on the *Gita* by B. G. Tilak

speech and action was imperfect. There can be no exception to a principle, and hence there can be no atonement for untruth spoken knowingly. Or the only possible atonement would be never to do so again. Atonement is possible only when some error is committed in ignorance. I think that this answers your second question too. Ask again if anything is still left out.

I have not revised this letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 222. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

122. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

February 10, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

What you have written is as good as saying that you like *pakodas* but not chapatis. But a person whose body acquires such a tendency should be considered diseased. A healthy person will never be able to satisfy his hunger by eating *pakodas*. He would ask only for bread. The same is true about the *Gita*. Once your mind has awakened, you are bound to like the *Gita*. You must think that there is something still lacking so long as you cannot like the *Gita*. But I, who prepare such recipes, should also be blamed. My prescription of the *Gita* for you is defective and that is the reason why you are not able to absorb it. What is the remedy?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9944. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

123. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

February 11, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter which consoles me. Those who believe in God's guidance just do the best they can and never worry. The sun has never been known to have suffered from overstrain and yet who slaves with such unexampled regularity as he! And why should we think that the sun is inanimate? The difference between

him and us may be that he has no choice, we have a margin no matter how precarious it may be. But no more speculation of this sort. Suffice it for us that we have his brilliant example in the matter of tireless energy. If we completely surrender ourselves to His will and really become ciphers, we too voluntarily give up the right of choice and then we need no wear and tear.

I have just commenced almond paste instead of milk. I was daily decreasing the quantity of milk because it was not suiting me. It may be that while I am resting, I do not need animal proteid. I am simply trying. Therefore, if you have more almond paste we had in London, please bring the bottles with you. Just now I am flourishing on dates, tomatoes and almond paste, of course with lemon and honey water twice during 24 hours. It is too early yet to say how I shall fare without milk. I shall not do anything consciously to injure my health, much as I would love to give up milk altogether.

There may be no time for you to tell me when you come, therefore let me know by letter how you washed the woollen blankets. Did you soak them in cold water or warm and how long? How much Lux did you use, in how much water? I propose to use powdered *Apana* soap. I am in no hurry.

I take it that you share my letters with the Ashram and that you get from the Ashram what may be worth knowing.

I had a letter directly from the Privats. They seem to have thoroughly enjoyed their stay and I am glad.

Do you ever meet Manilal our host and his wife?

If you meet Pyare Ali tell him or send him word not to send any more dates. I have about 20 lb. from Jerajani. Moreover what Pyare Ali gets are old dates and, therefore, they are weevily.

My love to Damodardas and his people.

Love from us both.

BAPU

[PS.]

The accompanying for Nargis. I have heard from Agatha Harrison. She says that Percy Bartlett and Hyam and a university girl are coming.[1] I forget the names. But perhaps you have heard from her too. I have Devi West's letter written to Ba.

From a photostat: C.W. 9504. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] These three English Quakers were to visit India "on an independent mission of conciliation".

124. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

February 11, 1932

CHI. MANUDI[1],

I got your letter. You should serve aunt. You are no longer a child. You are grown-up and can understand things. Aunt has looked after you with great care and shown you much affection too. I would not even know how to show such affection. You should also take care of your [body] and acquire good knowledge. The heap of picture-cards for you is growing bigger. Write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1510. Courtesy: Manubehn Mashruwala

125. LETTER TO MANSHANKAR J. TRIVEDI

February 11, 1932

CHI. MANU,

I did think of writing to you earlier. But even here I take up some work, and for its sake I postpone doing whatever else I can afford to.

I suppose you are thinking hard what you should do but there is no reason for worrying. Your duty now is to complete your work there. Study as hard as you can without impairing your health. You should learn the wisdom of the swan. Do you ever read Tulsidas? It is very useful to read him regularly. His work contains this verse:

> All things in the world,
> Both living and non-living,
> God has created a mixture of good and evil.
> The sage will, like the swan,
> Accept the milk of goodness
> Leaving out the water of evil.

[1] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi

In the same way you should accept the good which you see there and keep away from the evil. Moreover you are there as India's representative and should always represent what is good in the country. Keep away from the evils of India even for the sake of the country where you are. Ever since I came to know you at the Sassoon Hospital, I have never imagined you capable of any evil.

You must have now learnt German quite well. Write to me about your studies, your health and your companions.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You of course know that Sardar is here with me. He sends his blessings.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1004

126. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

February 11, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Champa seems to be pining to come and see me. Let her come next week. I hope Ratilal will not prevent her.

I got yesterday the post sent by you. It did not include a copy of "Ashram Samachar". Moreover, the second sheet of your letter was torn at the bottom. It was not torn here. Try to recollect if it was torn there. I also don't find a separate letter from Ranchhodbhai.

I could not discover here why you did not get the letter to Chanchalbehn and to the widow who had lost her son, namely, Nos. 1 and 22. They are certainly not with me. It is possible that, while the letters were being examined in the office here, these two slipped out and were lost. Henceforth I will try to send a list of names and numbers.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

After I had written this, I got your second post. Since Champa is calm, she need not come, if she doesn't wish to.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8209. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

127. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA N. KHARE

February 11, 1932

CHI. RAMBHAU ALIAS RAMACHANDRA KHARE,

Bravo! You have found a good argument. Since all others write, why need you? If everybody argued in that way, I would get no letters. Can't I also argue similarly? The correct reasoning, however, is this. If we do our duty, others also will do theirs some day. We have a saying to the effect: "If we ourselves are good, the whole world will be good."

Have you now completely overcome the habit of fibbing?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 290. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

128. LETTER TO JAISHANKAR P. TRIVEDI

February 11, 1932

BHAI TRIVEDI,

I wished to write to Manu earlier but could not write all these days. Whenever you wish, you may come and see me on a day fixed for visitors. It will always be possible to include you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1003

129. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL[1]

February 11, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

I have your letter. But I could not place you. Give me full particulars of yourself and tell me your age too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3979

130. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

February 12, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN (PARIKH),

If the pain in the ear has increased so much, did you consult anybody? I think you should get the ear examined once. If Haribhai[2] cannot understand the cause after examining it, you should pay a visit to Bombay. There are some good ear specialists there. Dr. Jivraj will take you to one.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5964. Also C.W. 3281. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

[1] Although Gandhiji mistook the identity, the addressee was in fact Pushpa S. Patel, as is evident from the letter to her dated March 5, 1932; *vide* p. 180. The misunderstanding was due to her letter being written in unusually good Hindi.

[2] Dr. Haribhai Desai

131. *LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL*

February 12, 1932

CHI. MANGALA (DARLING),

I got your letter. You must learn to avoid even the few mistakes which you make in reciting the *Gita* verses. Otherwise you will cease to be *ladki* and will remain a *lakdi* for ever.[1]

Where does Kamu[2] live? How is her health?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4075. Also C.W. 39. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

132. *LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE*

February 12, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I will forgive you everything except writing a bad hand. You should write each letter [in a word] as neatly as you draw a picture. Gajanan is there to help you. If you ask him he will teach you how to do so. It is a sort of game. You need not spend much time in practising. You should practise only for a short time every day. Tripathibhai's[3] Manu used to practise while lying ill in bed. He was in bed for one whole year.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 263. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Mangala Patel", p. 49.

[2] Presumably Kamalabehn Patel, addressee's elder sister

[3] Perhaps a slip for "Trivedibhai's". The reference is to Manushankar, son of Jaishankar P. Trivedi, who was ill in 1930.

133. LETTER TO SHANTA S. PATEL

February 12, 1932

CHI. SHANTA,

Why should you feel shy because Sardar is here? Is it because he is Sardar or because he is a Patel? If for the former reason, how long can you escape him? And as for being a Patel, he is no more one. Those who mix with Bhangis belong to all communities.

You have given plenty of news. Write whatever comes into your head. And see that you don't fall ill. If you surrender everything to God, you will not fall ill.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4064. Also C.W. 15. Courtesy: Shantabehn Patel

134. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

February 12, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I have your letter. I am glad that Vimal's[1] head has been shaved clean. It does not seem, at least from here, that there is anything about your Hindi teaching that deserves special notice. If you can attract all to the study of the *Ramayana*[2] you shall have gained two purposes at one stroke.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 4967. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra. Also G.N. 7490

[1] Addressee's younger son

[2] Gandhiji presumably meant *Ramacharitamanasa* by Tulsidas,

135. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

February 13, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

There is one thing which I noticed in English children but miss in those at the Ashram. Most of you cannot think what to write in a letter. This should not be. In this respect English children are smarter. I cannot say with certainty whether or not children outside the Ashram are like you. You should overcome this weakness.

So many things happen every day around you that, if you properly observe them, you would be able to write enough to fill pages. Why then should you be unable to think of anything to write about when you sit down to write to me? One can write all that one did, saw and thought during a day. You can say in a letter why you felt happy or unhappy on that day, as the case may be. You may also say what good thoughts or bad ones came to you on that day. It is possible that you are not sure whether you can write about these things in a letter. If so, let me tell you that you need have no such doubts. You can write just as you would talk to me. I shall now see what progress you make next week. Letter-writing also is an art. All our art springs from devotion to truth. Anyone who sits down to write a letter with the thought that he would write pure truth and pour out his love, is bound to write an interesting letter, since truth itself is God. There will always be art in anything we do or say or write with truth as witness and as object of our worship.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8936. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

136. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

February 13, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

Your nest is now almost empty. However, I write down in these letters, as I remember them from time to time, the things that I thought worth noting. As these letters are preserved, they may be of some use perhaps when you reassemble in future.

You have heard the name of M. Rolland. He is a great European writer and a saintly man. I went to see him. He has a sister who also may now be regarded aged, like him. She has remained unmarried with the sole purpose of helping her brother. The language of the two, the brother and the sister, is French. Rolland does not know English, but the sister does. One may say that the sister has merged her identity in her brother's. She looks after Rolland's needs in every respect. She works as his secretary and also as interpreter when Englishmen come to see him. Rolland has delicate health, and the sister guards it too. Though such examples of renunciation are rare in this world, we do come across them in the West. If there are any in our country, I do not know about them. By linking up celibacy with *moksha* we have made it rare, and it has also, therefore, become difficult to observe. On the other hand, in the West women observe it of their own free will for the sake of service to parents or a brother or some other cause, and they find it easy to observe. I wish to draw two lessons from this. One, the observance of *brahmacharya* for any selfless purpose is good, and two, its observance is perfectly easy for anybody who has, like Rolland's sister, a concrete reason, for his self-imposed task leaves such a person no time at all. Besides these two, there is of course the particular lesson that women have to learn from this example.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8935. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

137. A LETTER

February 13, 1932

CHI.,

This is what I mean when I say that I think of God every moment. During waking hours there is no time when I am not aware that God dwells within and observes everything. This awareness is intellectual and has been achieved through long practice. I do not say that my heart has such awareness, since I do not think that I am free from all fear. I do feel afraid of snakes, etc. Even though I look upon death as a friend, I also see deep-seated within me the desire to live. It seems that I love life and also that I would be ready to die. These two feelings together are strange, and because of this weakness I do not think I can say that my awareness of God is a matter of the heart also. That the intellect accepts that He dwells in the heart is another matter. One who actually feels the presence of God in his heart would be wholly free from blind attachment to the body. I can see that I have not reached that stage, and yet so complete and firm is the intellectual acceptance of this idea that I also feel it is slowly sinking into the heart. I cannot go further than this. . . .[1]

I trust you are no more rigid about food. It is necessary to take fruit along with milk, and preferably fresh fruit. A small quantity of uncooked leafy vegetables also should be included. Tomato and lettuce are considered good. There is a science of diet too, and it should not be disregarded. We know that our food ought to be *sattvik*, but we have to learn from experience which food can be considered *sattvik*. It is not necessary that one's food should have all the characteristics of *sattvik* food mentioned in the *Gita*.[2] Experience shows that we need fire very little. Personally, I am certain in my mind that it is sufficient that our food is ripened by the sun. All that I wish to say is that we should give the body what it requires from among the things which are acceptable to us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8938. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

1. Omission as in the source
2. *Vide* Vol. XXXII, pp. 332-3.

138. A LETTER

February 13, 1932

CHI.,

Ramarajya means rule of the people. A person like Rama would never wish to rule. God calls Himself a servant of his servants.

You may certainly wear shorts and a shirt when doing exercise or when cooking or doing many other things. Do you massage your body?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8964. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

139. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

February 13, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Whenever a letter from me is delivered late to you, you should examine the postmark and let me know the date [of its clearance].

To what term has Kisan been sentenced? Where is she kept?

You can certainly open the trunks. If they contain books, they must be taken out and kept in the right places, and, if they contain any other material, all the items will have to be listed and properly disposed of. If you do not know what to do about them, send the list to me. I will then be able to tell you what to do. Even if some of the books belong to other people, it does not matter. If they bear the names of their owners, they can easily be kept separately from the others. If they bear no names there will be no harm if the Ashram stamp is put on them. If, afterwards, these books are claimed by any persons, they should be handed over to them. Our duty is to take all possible care of the books while they are in our possession.

Which statement of mine did you interpret to mean that, according to me, the Ashram had nothing to do with education? My view is this: literary education —formal education—is given a secondary place in the Ashram. That is why the Ashram could

not be made a Vidyapith. But such education is certainly useful and necessary, and that is why the Vidyapith was established. The Ashram and the Vidyapith supplement each other. Because of this limitation of its sphere of activities, the collection of books in the Ashram should be restricted.[1] The Vidyapith can have no such restriction. The restrictions on it relate to its internal experiments. The Ashram has a big name and certain extravagant notions have come to be formed about it, so that it receives books on all kinds of subjects and in many languages. The Vidyapith is the right place where they can be preserved. The Ashram, on the other hand, should have only such books as relate to the subjects which we study. What books fall in this class, you and others can easily decide. Whenever you cannot decide you may consult me. Personally, however, I don't see what difficulty you can experience in this matter. After so many years of the Ashram's existence, we should be able to tell immediately what kinds of books we generally require. If at any time we require some other books, we can take advantage of the collection in the Vidyapith. We should not regard the Ashram and the Vidyapith as two independent institutions. Their spheres of activity are different, but the two have much in common between them and that area is gradually expanding.

If you do not understand any point in this, ask me again.

I am sure I do not consciously refuse to hear or observe anything against a person about whom my views are formed.[2] I always hear what others say, but my views may not change. I think it would be wrong for anyone to change, quickly, views formed after careful observation. It would, of course, be obstinacy never to change them. Hence, that too would be wrong. But there should be a sound reason for changing such a view. Often I require the evidence of proved facts. I cherish this nature of mine, which has saved me from many dangers and kept my relations with people unclouded by suspicion.

You are, therefore, free to ask me what you like. You will not get such an opportunity again.

The distinction you have made is correct.[3] The writer of articles in *Young India* is one person, and the man whom the

[1] The addressee had objected to the transfer of books to the Vidyapith as this would be so much loss to the Ashram.

[2] The addressee had made this charge against Gandhiji.

[3] The addressee had stated that Gandhiji the writer in *Young India* appeared to be on a much higher plane than Gandhiji the man who had human limitations.

inmates of the Ashram know intimately is another. In *Young India*, I might present myself as one of the Pandavas, but, in the Ashram, how can I help showing myself as I am? I am, moreover, a votary of truth and can make no attempt consciously to hide my weaknesses. Hence, the Kauravas dwelling in me make their presence felt in one way or another. Haven't you said that a conflict is always going on in me between the divine and the demoniac? I feel, however, that the Kauravas are being vanquished. But one cannot yet be positive about that. As Solon[1] has said, the final judgment about a man can be expressed only after his death. I have known cases in which crores were reduced to a cowrie in a moment. I have, therefore, no pride in me at all. And what does pride avail one?

Remember that I do not revise the letters after writing them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10272. Also C.W. 6720. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

140. LETTER TO DURGA DESAI

February 14, 1932

CHI.,

Tell Mahadev that the lucky ones get 'C' class, and that the unfortunate get 'A' class even if they ask for 'C'. But we should accept whatever class we are awarded and learn what we can from our life as a prisoner in that class. Those whose minds run after comforts and luxuries may bother themselves with the distinction between 'A' and 'C'. Those who find their happiness in self-denial should seek opportunities to practise it in all circumstances. The field for such opportunities is unlimited. One should not seek self-denial which will tear apart the skin on one's back. Such self-denial is forbidden. Let him remember the following two *shlokas*:

> Those men who, wedded to pretentiousness and arrogance, possessed by the violence of lust and passion, practise fierce austerity not ordained by Shastras.[2]

[1] An ancient Greek philosopher
[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, XVII. 5

They, whilst they torture the several elements that make up their bodies, torture Me to dwelling in them; know them to be of unholy resolves.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8934. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

141. LETTER TO PADMA

February 14, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I got your letter. The Bhowali sanatorium is very near the place where you stay. I would advise you to get yourself examined there. Is there anybody there to help you? Is Joshiji[2] there? It is rather surprising that there is no one there who can teach the *Gita*. Is Shantilal there? He is bound to know it. However, I don't worry about this. Nor need you. You should first get back your health.

I hope you know that Maitri and Durgi have gone to Darjeeling for some time. Sarojinidevi should of course stay with you. That is perfectly in order. Shila must be growing into a big girl now. Do you take care of her?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6129. Also C.W. 3481. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

142. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Night, February 11/15, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got both your packets. The fact that Ramji does not get yarn means, does it not, that we are short of it. Is the position likely to be the same at other places too? You alone can explain this.

I think you know that Madanmohan Bauhra wishes to come here for my *darshan*. Read my reply to him.

The problem of Budhabhai and Parvati seems a difficult one. Personally, I feel that they should live separately for some time.

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, XVII. 6

[2] Presumably Chhaganlal Joshi, who was in Almora for some time.

If you agree with this suggestion, try for it. If something else occurs to you, write to me. Does Parvati behave properly in the Ashram? Does she observe the rules?

You are being tested fairly well, it seems.

February 12, 1932

You have to carry a fairly good burden on account of the dairy. You are strong enough for that and transfer the burden to God, and so I don't worry. It will be enough if Parnerkar can live there quietly. Let him do what he wishes.

My views about the orchard should be treated as those of a man without experience in that field. That is, unless they are confirmed by an expert, count them as no better than deserving to be thrown into the river Sabarmati.

Get some news about Prabhudas. If it is necessary, as his guardian, write to the authorities where he was sentenced to and inquire in which jail he is kept. Send to him at the address of that jail Dr. Talwalkar's letter regarding his health.

Mirabehn had written to me directly and I, too, have replied[1] to her directly. I have asked her to send that letter to you.

Totaramji should be examined by Haribhai for his piles. Does he suffer from constipation?

With whom do they intend to keep Dhiru in Palanpur? What about Vimala?

Send to the Japanese writer permission to translate *Young India* articles after informing Jivanji[2].

If Jairamdas's letter contains nothing objectionable, it can certainly be sent to me.

Afternoon, February 15, 1932

I don't ask you in every letter to convey the Sardar's blessings or regards to all. But you should assume that he sends them with every letter. There are 68 letters this time, besides the talk on the *Gita* and this letter to you. A list is attached herewith, so that, if you do not receive any of the letters, you and I will know which.

Blessings from
BAPU[3]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8203. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* pp. 81-2.

[2] Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, printer and publisher of *Navajivan*

[3] For the text of the *Gita* discourse (Ch. XVII) which followed, *vide* "Letters on the *Gita*", pp. 144-5.

143. LETTER TO PHILIP HARTOG

February 15, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry I was unable, owing to circumstances beyond my control, to fulfil the promise I gave you about my statement[1] on the condition of primary education in India during the pre-British time. Immediately on my landing I entrusted the research to Advocate Munshi, a member of the Bombay University Senate, and two other educationist[2] friends. But they too like me find themselves civil resistance prisoners. I had asked Advocate Munshi to put himself in direct touch with you. But his arrest came so soon after mine that I hardly think he could have corresponded with you. As I am permitted to carry on non-political correspondence, I have now asked Prof. Shah to test my statement and give you the result of his test. As I found in you a fellow-seeker after the truth, I was most anxious to give you satisfaction either by confirming my statement or withdrawing it as publicly as I had made it. I thought that I would tell you what I had done in pursuance of my promise.

As I have not your private address by me, I am sending this to you under care India Office.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9410. Courtesy: India Office Library

[1] On October 20, 1931, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs; *vide* Vol. XLVIII, pp. 199-200.

[2] The source has "educational".

144. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

Silence Day [On or after *February 15, 1932*][1]

CHI. NIRMALA (AUNT),

What sort of a girl you are that you complain of absence of letters from me while you yourself do not write. Did Durga convey my message to Mahadev? How is she? Ask her to write to me. How is Bablo[2]?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9461

145. LETTER TO R. V. MARTIN

February 16, 1932

DEAR MAJOR MARTIN,

In continuation of my letter[3] to Major Bhandari and in confirmation of our conversation of today, what I need is the human touch with the co-workers who are not known to political fame and who have been brought to Yeravda. I have specially in mind Messrs Chhaganlal Joshi, Surendranath, Somabhai and my son, Ramdas. They, I know, are in the batch that was first sent to Yeravda. I need scarcely say that I have no desire to have any political discussion with them. And I can have no idea whatsoever of interfering with jail discipline.

As the matter has been now hanging for some time I would thank you to expedite it as much as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Home Department, Government of Bombay, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] From the reference to the "message to Mahadev" to be conveyed by Durga Desai (*vide* "Letter to Durga Desai", 14-2-1932), the letter appears to have been written on the Silence Day subsequent to February 14.

[2] Narayan Desai, son of Mahadev Desai

[3] *Vide* pp. 62-3.

146. LETTER TO RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

February 16, 1932

DEAR RAMANANDA BABU,

I have duly received the *Golden Book*[1]. What treasures of love have you poured into it? I gave two hours to it straightway. Thank you for thinking of sending it to me here. Had I got it outside, I would not have been able to go beyond opening it and laying it down with a sigh.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 9502. Courtesy: Santa Devi

147. LETTER TO TRIVENI J. MEHTA

February 18, 1932

CHI. TRIVENI,

I got your letter. There is no fixed mould for education. It consists in the purity of one's love. A mother spoils her child if she regards it as hers. If, instead, she brings it up as a trust received from God, the child soon learns to behave well. I am writing on this subject[2] in today's letter for the women. Read it and think over it. Instead of paying attention to the weaknesses of others, we should try to become better ourselves.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. TRIVENI JAGJIVANDAS MEHTA
SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 70. Also C.W. 8941. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *The Golden Book of Tagore*; *vide* "Letter to Ramananda Chatterjee", p. 68.

[2] *Vide* the following item.

148. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

February 18, 1932

DEAR SISTERS,

Regardless of your number, someone among you should still shoulder the responsibility and keep your Association going. Prayers should continue without any change. I should regularly get a letter on behalf of all the women. Otherwise I, too, am likely by and by to get tired of writing. Who among you has charge of my letters and preserves them?

I will write today about a school that struck me as a wonderful institution. One or two men and one or two women run it jointly. They believe that even the dullest child responds to the law of love. And, accordingly, they have taken in hand the work of educating abandoned orphans who have become practically mindless. The school is run according to certain principles which their teacher has discovered through experiments in the method of love. These men and women have dedicated their lives to such children, who do not know that they are destitute and have no parents. They are brought up in open air and sunshine; the building they live in stands on spacious open ground. They are cured chiefly with the help of music. They make some slow artistic movements to the accompaniment of music, and even become absorbed in them. The women teachers treat the children as their own. They have their meals with the children, keep them cheerful and busy in games the whole day and gradually bring them out of their stupor. These kind-hearted men and women have been carrying on this experiment for the last three or four years only. This wonderful school is situated very near to where Mr. Horace Alexander lives. Seeing the school, I bowed my head in reverence and wondered what love could not do. It can make the dumb speak and the lame climb a mountain.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8947. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

149. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

February 18, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I got your letter. I may not give you full marks, because no examiner does. But according to me you deserve full marks. I should really learn from you. Always write as beautifully as you did this time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4076. Also C.W. 40. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

150. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

February 18, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I get your letters regularly. But I hope you will satisfy my wish. Learn the alphabet carefully with Gajanan's help and then write to me in a beautiful hand. Won't you do this?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 262. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

151. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

February 18, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

I got your letter. You have also improved your handwriting well enough. And now you play on the harmonium. Must I come there and hear you play? But who knows how many years you will take to learn to play so well that one would enjoy hearing it? Must both of us remain here till then?

What do you say?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3980. Also C.W. 26. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

152. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

February 18, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

Take this a letter for you in your own strip of paper. When you have no ruled paper, you should rule a sheet with your own hands.

When you see Narahari, tell him that I was glad he asked for and got class 'C'. I lay down one condition, however. He should take care of his health and not fall ill again. See that you learn now to write a letter properly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5765. Also C.W. 2988. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

153. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

February 18, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

I got your letter. If you cannot think what to write in your letter, take Premabehn's help. In a few days you will learn to write a very good letter. I am very glad that you feel happy there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9421. Courtesy Ravindra R. Patel

154. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

February 18, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

You have raised a correct question. You are sure that beating necessarily involves violence but it is not so. Supposing somebody has been bitten by a snake and is about to faint. In that case he will have to be fed even if it means beating him. This is no violence because this beating is inspired by love and is for

the good of the patient. But supposing I have an ill feeling for you in my mind but do not beat you for want of an opportunity. Such an ill feeling is violence. The origin of violence lies in our own minds.

You can have cod-liver oil massage even if you have never taken it orally.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9945. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

155. LETTER TO KAPILRAI MEHTA

February 19, 1932

CHI. KAPIL,

I was glad you wrote to me. I was wondering where you were. I would advise you not to become the least impatient but to take complete rest and build up good health. Don't be in a hurry to start eating cereals, but go on living on milk, curds and fruit for some more time. You should also eat lettuce and some raw tomatoes. By raw I mean not unripe; I mean fully ripe but uncooked tomatoes. And write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Nanabhai[1] that I often think of him and the Dakshinamurti[2] people.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3977. Also C.W. 1598. Courtesy: Kapilrai Mehta

[1] Nrisinhprasad Kalidas Bhatt
[2] An educational institution in Bhavnagar

156. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN N. KHARE

February 19, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMIBEHN,

I have again been writing letters to the women, but who is in charge of the work now? Why don't you write [to me]? The class which was started ought not to be given up. The women who are still there should decide to continue it and you should then let me know. It is you who should take up this burden.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 279-a. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

157. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

February 19, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

Your letter was very good. I was glad that you wrote quite freely.

This is my reply to your criticism[1]. I must hear what the persons concerned have to say in their defence. Only after that can I express my opinion in each case. In a general way, however, I can say that, whenever some freedom was permitted, it was done not as a privilege but as a matter of necessity. I have formed the impression that those who permit themselves any freedom do so not out of lethargy but because their bodies, or say their natures, demand it. We ought not to sit in judgment over others. We may not even be aware of the effort they make [to follow the rules]. This does not mean that such persons have no imperfection in them. If they did not have any, why did they join the Ashram at all? They are not hypocrites. There is a great error in believing that everyone should or can do what one does. If I tried to lift a weight which Hariyomal[2] can, I would die that

[1] Regarding inmates of the Ashram allowing themselves freedom from one or other of the Ashram rules

[2] A strong man from Sind who worked on the Ashram farm

very moment. Similarly, it would be wrong of him to envy me my weakness.

Many have said that people deceive me. I don't say that no one deceives me, but the number of such persons is certainly not large. I have observed that many persons cannot, when they are away from me, keep up the standard of behaviour which they preserve when I am there. Some even leave me for this reason. There are many such instances and that is why I have been accused of possessing a kind of magnetism.

But this is not likely to satisfy you or others. Nor have I said this to defend myself. I have only explained my attitude. The real position, however, is this, and I have held this belief for many years. The deficiencies of the Ashram reflect my own. I have told many people that they cannot know me by meeting me. When they meet me, I may even impress them as being good. Even if I am not good, people would believe that I was because I am a lover of truth. My love of truth casts a momentary spell over people. In order to know me, people should see the Ashram in my absence. There would be no error and no injustice to me in believing that all its deficiencies are a reflection of my own deficiencies. It is but true that I have drawn the crowd which has gathered in the Ashram. If, though living in the Ashram, they have not been able to overcome their weaknesses but have, on the contrary, developed more, the fault is not theirs but mine. The imperfection of my spiritual striving is responsible for this state of affairs. Nor is it that I do not observe or know about my shortcomings. All that I can say is that they are there despite my best efforts to overcome them. And, moreover, I am convinced that, because I am ceaselessly striving to improve the Ashram, it has not, on the whole, fallen altogether from its ideal. I derive some satisfaction from the thought that every one of the three Ashrams which I established served or has served its immediate aim. I will not, however, deceive myself or anybody else with this comforting thought. I wish to travel far and there are hills and valleys to be crossed on the way. I am resolved, however, to continue the journey. And I rest in peace in the knowledge that there is no defeat in the quest for truth.

It is true indeed that the Ashram has not been able to attract the learned class. The reason is that I don't regard myself as a learned man. The few learned men who were drawn to the Ashram joined it not in order to pursue their learned callings but to receive and nurse something else altogether. They [are] seekers after truth. The quest of truth may be undertaken even by the

illiterate, by children and by the old, by women and by men. Literary education sometimes serves as the golden lid which covers the face of truth. I do not, by saying this, condemn such education, but only put it in its proper place. It is one of the means [in the pursuit of truth].

We have selected most of the prayers from Sanskrit because it is chiefly Hindus who joined the Ashram. We have no aversion to prayers in other languages. Don't we use such prayers occasionally? If, instead of a large number of Hindus, a large number of Muslims had joined the Ashram, prayers from the Koran would be recited every day and I would even join such prayers.

Does this answer your doubts? Does it satisfy you? If it does not, ask me again and again. I shall not get tired. I wish to satisfy you. Don't get tired.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10273. Also C.W. 6721. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

158. LETTER TO MATHURADAS PURUSHOTTAM

February 20, 1932

CHI. MATHURADAS[1],

I am glad that you have gone to the Ashram. I wrote that to Kamu many years ago. Doctors are now gradually coming to the conclusion that all diseases have one common cause and that, therefore, their main remedy also should be one. If anybody disregards modifications of that one remedy, that would not do him much or any harm. It might be said that the disease was not cured. But what even if the disease is cured? Surely the body does not become immune to death. Hence, if anybody sticks to only one remedy with faith, he commits no sin.

This is also true about spiritual maladies. The cause is always one, and that is the ego. The remedy also is one—giving up the ego, that is, reducing oneself to a cipher. How will one who is a cipher steal? How will he tell a lie or commit adultery? The very questions you have asked spring from ignorance. Let us take just one example. Of course you do not steal in the ordinary sense, but you are right in thinking that your lack of con-

[1] Mathuradas P. Asar, an expert carder and khadi worker of the Ashram

trol in eating is a form of stealing. The remedy for this kind of stealing and the ordinary kind must be the same, that is, to give up the habit, to stop eating what you should not. But who is it that eats such food? The ego-self. Once that has vanished, the other self, though eating, will not be eating and will only give the body its wages. There will be no more question, then, of indulging the palate. Probably you will accept all this with your reason, but it will have meaning only if it sinks into the heart. We live in the Ashram and seek good company, sing *bhajans*, etc., daily, in order that this truth may sink into the heart. Some day we shall find what we are seeking. In other words, our malady in the form of the ego will be cured. From this you should be able to deduce all the answers, and if you cannot, no matter how much I write and explain, you will not feel satisfied. Ask me again and again till your doubts are resolved.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3753

159. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA S. KAMDAR

February 20, 1932

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA,

I got your letter. You have become careless about your handwriting. You ought not to have. Because you are married you should not forget what you have learnt; on the contrary, you should improve yourself. Forget your grief over Arvind[1]. Such separations are inevitable so long as we live in the body, and we ought to bear them.

You may write to me whenever you wish to, and, so long as I can see visitors, you can certainly come. Do come. I don't know how long I shall continue to see visitors.

Blessings from both of us. We are both faring well.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7469. Also C.W. 4915. Courtesy: Hari-ichchha S. Kamdar

[1] Addressee's son, who died an infant

160. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

February 20, 1932

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

I have your letter.

There is not the slightest doubt that if we condone or take direct or indirect advantage of the untruth spoken or practised by a person with whom we associate, we become party to his untruth. It is for this reason that Tulsidas advises us to seek the company of the good. However, in practical life we cannot always live up to the ideal. We have to bear with our co-workers. We may consider the circumstances in each case and act within the limits of our capacity. We ought not to join where untruth is being deliberately practised, but having once found ourselves in a certain situation, it may not be possible to force ourselves out of it. Where the situation is *ab initio* permeated with untruth, we have of course the weapon of non-co-operation. Surely, it cannot be claimed that no one practises untruth in the Ashram. Still, we do not close down the Ashram, nor do we condone untruth; but we bear with our associates and strive to advance further every day. Nobody in this world can do more than this.

Have you come to know about the new method of spinning the *takli*? It is being practised at Wardha. One can draw 160 rounds in half an hour by following it. Why should your diary include anything other than your own daily activities? If necessary, you may give up recording even these.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9508. Also C.W. 424. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

161. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

February 20, 1932

BHAI VITHALDAS,

I got your letter. Take rest till your body has completely recovered its strength. Do not be in the least impatient. The reason why khadi sales have gone down this time is as clear as daylight. But do not worry over that. "It is useless to sorrow over what God ordains."[1]

Sardar is very well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9778. Also C.W. 2808. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

162. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI[2]

February 20, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMI,

Your handwriting is certainly good. Why don't you write in ink? The service you are giving to Jerajani [in his illness] is the best preparation for your future life.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. VITHALDAS JERAJANI
SASAVANE
DISTRICT ALIBAG

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9778. Also C.W. 2809. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

[1] *Ashram Bhajanavali*; *vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 447.

[2] This letter is written on the postcard to Vithaldas Jerajani; *vide* the preceding item.

163. LETTER TO RAMESHWARLAL BAZAJ

[Before *February 21, 1932*][1]

BHAI RAMESHWARLAL[2],

I have your letter. I hope you received the letter I sent through Miss Lester.

My health is perfect. These days I do not take milk. I usually take almond paste, dates and tomatoes. I take an occasional *papaya*. The government have put no restriction on my diet. The weight is 106 pound. It was the same outside. There is no need to send anything from there. I get excellent almonds. Honey from Mahabaleshwar is sent to me. Write whenever you feel like it.

My time is spent in spinning and reading. A good deal of time is devoted to letter-writing as I am permitted to write to Ashram inmates. And I also sleep enough during the day-time. I walk about for two hours. Sardar Vallabhbhai is with me.

You must be receiving letters from Rukmini[3]. Both she and the baby are doing well. When will you come back?

I always recall your love.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 9446. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

[1] It is evident from the details of Gandhiji's diet given in the letter that it was written before February 21, 1932 when Gandhiji started taking vegetables in the place of *papaya*; *vide* "Diary, 1932".

[2] Benarsilal Bazaj's father, residing in Britain

[3] Rukmini Benarsilal Bazaj, daughter of Maganlal Gandhi

164. *LETTERS ON THE "GITA"*[1]

CHAPTER I[2]

Tuesday Morning, November 11, 1930

The *Gita* is a small portion of the *Mahabharata*. The latter is generally looked upon as a historical work. To us, however, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are not historical works but are treatises on religion. Or, if we call them histories, they narrate the history of the human soul; they do not tell of what happened thousands of years ago, but depict what takes place in the heart of every human being today. Both the works describe the eternal war between the God and the demon in man—between Rama and Ravana. The *Gita* does this in the form of a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. The dialogue is narrated to the blind Dhritarashtra by Sanjaya. Literally *Gita* means that which is sung. The adjective applies to the noun Upanishad, which is understood, and so the full meaning of the phrase is "the Upanishad which was sung". Upanishad means knowledge-teaching.

[1] Written during Gandhiji's incarceration in Yeravda Central Prison in 1930 and 1932, these were sent weekly along with letters to Narandas Gandhi for being read out at the Ashram prayer meetings. Gandhiji commenced the series with Chapter XII; *vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 277. The following week Gandhiji sent Chapter I, with a general introductory note on the *Gita*.

All the chapters are given here under February 19/21, 1932, the date of despatch of the letter to Narandas Gandhi, which carried the discourse on Chapter XVIII and concluded the series; *vide* the following item. The translation is reproduced from the *Discourses on the Gita* (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14, 1960) with slight changes to bring the text into conformity with the Gujarati original.

The Translator's Preface in the *Discourses on the Gita* says: "Gandhiji's Gujarati translation of the *Gita* was published on March 12, 1930, the never-to-be-forgotten day on which he marched to Dandi from Sabarmati. A member of the Ashram who read it found it very difficult to understand and complained about it to Gandhiji who was then in Yeravda Prison. Thereupon, he wrote a series of letters to the Ashram in which he devoted one letter to each chapter on the *Gita*. . . ."

For Gandhiji's discourses on the *Gita* at Ashram prayer meetings in 1926, *vide* Vol. XXXII, pp. 94-376, and for his Gujarati translation of the *Gita* with a commentary thereon written in 1929, *vide* vol. XLI, pp. 90-133.

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi" 11-11-1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 293-5.

The word '*Gita*,' therefore, means Shri Krishna's teaching to Arjuna. In reading the *Gita* we should feel that Shri Krishna—God—dwells in our hearts as the holy spirit within us, and that when, yearning for knowledge, like Arjuna, we take our spiritual difficulties to Him and seek His guidance, seek refuge in Him, He is ever ready to instruct us. We slumber, but the Lord within us is ever awake. He is only waiting for spiritual yearning to be awakened in us. We, however, do not know how to question Him, do not even feel the desire to do so. And so we read a work like the *Gita* every day and meditate over its teaching. By doing so, we wish to awaken spiritual yearning in us and learn what questions to put to the Lord. Whenever we are faced with spiritual difficulties, we turn to the *Gita* for their solution and obtain peace of mind through it. This is the spirit in which we should read the work. It is as it were our revered guru, our mother, and we should have faith that we shall be safe if we seek shelter in her lap. We can get all our spiritual difficulties solved through the *Gita*. Anyone who daily meditates over the teaching of the *Gita* in this manner will ever experience new joy in his study and find new meanings. There is no spiritual problem which the *Gita* cannot solve, though it may be that owing to our imperfect faith we do not know how to read and understand the work. We read the *Gita* as daily spiritual practice so that our faith may increase from day to day and we may become vigilant. I give here, for the guidance of the inmates of the Ashram, the meaning of the *Gita* which my daily meditation over its teaching has revealed or reveals to me.

When the Pandavas and the Kauravas gathered together on the battle-field of Kurukshetra (the field of Kuru) with their armies, Duryodhana, the king of the Kauravas, approached Drona (his teacher in the science of war) and named the leading warriors on either side. As a signal for the battle to begin, conch-shell horns were sounded on both the sides and Shri Krishna who was Arjuna's charioteer drove his chariot into a place between the two armies. The scene which greeted Arjuna's eyes unnerved him, and he said to Shri Krishna: "How can I attack these in battle? I might readily enough if I had to fight with strangers, but these are my kinsmen. The Kauravas and the Pandavas are first cousins. We were brought up together. Drona is our teacher as well as the Kauravas'. Bhishma is a revered elder for both. How can I fight against him? It is true that the Kauravas are miscreants and doers of evil deeds. They have wronged the Pandavas and deprived them of their

lands. They have insulted the saintly Draupadi. But what shall I gain by killing them? They are fools indeed. But shall I also be equally foolish? I have some little knowledge. I can discriminate between right and wrong. I thus see that it is a sin to fight against relatives. Never mind if they have taken wrongful possession of the Pandavas' share in the kingdom. Never mind even if they kill us. But how dare we raise our hand against them? O Krishna, I will not fight against my kith and kin."

With these words, Arjuna sank down on the seat of the chariot, being overwhelmed by grief.

Here ends the first Chapter which is entitled "The Sorrow of Arjuna". All of us should feel pain even as Arjuna did. No acquisition of knowledge is possible unless there is in us a sense of something lacking and a desire to know the truth. If a man is not curious even to know what is wrong and what is right, what is the use of religion for him? The battle-field of Kurukshetra only provides the occasion for the dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. The real Kurukshetra is the human heart, which is also a dharmakshetra (the field of righteousness) if we look upon it as the abode of God and invite Him to take hold of it. Some battle or other is fought on this battle-field from day to day. Most of these battles arise from the distinction between 'mine' and 'thine', between kinsmen and strangers. Therefore, as we shall find later on, the Lord tells Arjuna that attraction (*raga*) and repulsion (*dvesha*) lie at the root of sin. When I look upon a person or thing as 'mine', *raga* takes hold of my mind; and when I look upon him as a stranger, aversion or hatred enters the mind. Therefore we must forget the distinction between 'mine' and 'thine'. That is to say, we must give up our likes and dislikes. This is the teaching of the *Gita* and all other scriptures. To say this is one thing; to practise it is quite another. The *Gita* is there to teach us how to practise it. We will try to understand the method it recommends.

CHAPTER II[1]

Monday Morning, November 17, 1930

When Arjuna had picked himself up a little, the Lord rebuked him and said: "How is it that this delusion has come to you? It is unworthy of a warrior like you." But even then Arjuna stuck to his first position, refused to fight and said: "If in order to get it,

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 13/17-11-1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 317-22.

I have to slay elders and other relations, I do not want not only a kingdom on this earth but even the delights of paradise. My mind gropes in darkness. I do not know where my duty lies. I put myself into your hands. Please guide me."

Finding that Arjuna was bewildered and aspired after knowledge, Krishna had pity on him and proceeded to explain things to him: "Your sorrow is for nothing, and you utter words about wisdom without understanding. You have evidently forgotten the distinction between the body and the embodied soul. The soul never dies; but the body passes through childhood, youth and old age and perishes in the end. The body is born but the soul is birthless and unchanging. It ever was, is now and will be there for all time to come. For whom then do you grieve? Your grief arises from a delusion. You look upon these Kauravas as your own, but you are aware that their bodies will come to an end. And as for the souls which inhabit these bodies, no one can destroy them. The soul cannot be wounded by weapons, burned by fire, dried by the wind or drowned in water. Then again, consider this from the standpoint of your duty as a warrior with an army under his command. If you refuse to fight this righteous war, the consequences will be the very reverse of what you expect and you will become an object of ridicule. You have always enjoyed the reputation of being a brave man. But if now you withdraw from the battle, you will be supposed to have been driven from it by fear. If it were part of your duty to flee in the face of danger, disgrace would not matter, but if you retire from battle now, you will have failed to discharge your duty, and people will be justified in condemning your flight.

"Thus far, I have tried to reason out things, draw a distinction between the body and the soul and remind you of your duty as a warrior. But let me now explain karmayoga (the method of action). A practitioner of karmayoga never comes to harm. It has nothing to do with chopping logic. It is something to be translated into action and experience. An ounce of practice is more profitable than tons of argumentation. And this practice too must not be vitiated by speculation about its fruit. Literalists perform Vedic rites directed to the acquisition of material rewards. If one rite does not yield the expected fruit, they have recourse to another, and being disappointed once more, they take up a third. And thus they suffer from utter mental confusion. As a matter of fact, it is up to us to do our duty without wasting a single thought on the fruits of our action. To fight is the duty you have to discharge at present. Gain or loss, defeat or

victory, is not in your power. Why should you carry the needless burden of thinking about them and be like the dog who walks under a cart and imagines that it is being drawn by himself and not by the bullocks? Defeat and victory, heat and cold, pleasure and pain come to a man in turn and he must put up with them. Without worrying about the fruit of action, a man must devote himself to the performance of his duty with an evenness of temper. This is yoga, or skill in action. The success of an act lies in performing it, and not in its result, whatever it is. Therefore be calm and do your duty regardless of consequences."

On hearing all this Arjuna said: "The course of conduct you have mapped out for me seems to be beyond my capacity. Not to worry about defeat or victory, not to waste a thought on the result—how can one attain such evenness of temper and steadfastness in spirit? How does a man with such attainments behave, and how are we to recognize him?"

The Lord replied: "O King, one who renounces all the cravings which torment the heart and derives his contentment from within himself is said to be a *sthitaprajna* or *samadhistha* (one stable in spirit). He is unruffled in adversity, and he does not hanker after happiness. Pleasure and pain are felt through the five senses. Therefore this wise man draws his senses away from sense-objects even as a tortoise draws in his limbs. The tortoise withdraws into his shell when he apprehends danger. But in the case of human beings sense-objects are ready to attack the senses at all times; therefore their senses must always be drawn in, and they should be ever ready to fight against sense-objects. This is the real battle. Some people resort to self-mortification and fasting as weapons of defence against sense-objects. These measures have their limited use. The senses do not make for sense-objects so long as a man is fasting, but fasting alone does not destroy his relish for them. On the other hand that relish may be heightened when the fast is broken, and a man can get rid of it only with the grace of God. The senses are so powerful that they drag a man behind them by force if he is not on his guard. Therefore a man must always keep them under control. This end he can achieve only if he turns his eyes inward, realizes God who resides in his heart and is devoted to Him. One who thus looks upon Me as His goal and surrenders his all to Me, keeping his senses in control, is a yogi stable in spirit.

"On the other hand, if a man is not master of his senses, he is always musing on the objects of sense and conceives an attachment for them, so that he can hardly think of anything else. From

this attachment arises desire; and when the desire is thwarted he gets angry. Anger drives him nearly mad. He cannot understand what he is about. He thus loses his memory, behaves in a disorderly manner and comes to an ignoble end. When a man's senses rove at will, he is like a rudderless ship which is at the mercy of the gale and is broken to pieces on the rocks. Men should therefore abandon all desires and restrain their senses, so that these do not indulge in undesirable activity. The eyes then will look straight and that too only at holy objects; the ears will listen to hymns in praise of God or to cries of distress; hands and feet will be engaged in service. Indeed all the organs of sense and of action will be employed in helping a man to do his duty and making him a fit recipient of the grace of God. And once the grace of God has descended upon him, all his sorrows are at an end. As snow melts in the sunshine, all pain vanishes when the grace of God shines upon him and he is said to be stable in spirit.

"But if a man is not stable-minded, how can he think good thoughts? Without good thoughts there is no peace, and without peace there is no happiness. Where a stable-minded man sees things clear as daylight, the unstable man distracted by the turmoil of the world is as good as blind. On the other hand what is pure in the eyes of the worldly-wise looks unclean to and repels the stable-minded man. Rivers continuously flow into the sea, but the sea remains unmoved; in the same way all sense-objects come to the yogi, but he always remains calm like the sea. Thus one who abandons all desires, is free from pride and selfishness and behaves as one apart, finds peace. This is the condition of a perfect man of God, and he who is established therein even at the final hour attains the beatitude of Brahman."

CHAPTER III[1]

Monday Morning, November 24, 1930

When Krishna had thus set forth the marks of identification for a *sthitaprajna* person, Arjuna received the impression that one had only to sit quiet in order to attain such a state, as Krishna had not made the slightest reference to any need for action on his part. He therefore asked Krishna: "It seems as if you hold that knowledge is superior to action. If so, why are you urging me to this terrible deed and thus confusing my mind? Please tell me clearly where my welfare lies."

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 21/25-11-1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 336-41.

Krishna replied: "O sinless Arjuna, since the beginning of time seekers have taken one or the other of two different paths. In one of these the pride of place is given to knowledge and in the other it is given to action. But you will find that freedom from action cannot be attained without action, that wisdom never comes to a man simply on account of his having ceased to act. Man does not become perfect merely by renouncing everything. Don't you see that every one of us is doing something or other all the time? Our very nature impels us to action. Such being the law of nature, one who sits with folded hands but lets his mind dwell on the objects of sense is a fool and may even be called a hypocrite. Rather than indulge in such senseless inactivity, is it not better that a man should control the senses, overcome his likes and dislikes, and engage himself in some activity or other without fuss and in a spirit of detachment? Do your allotted duty, restraining the organs of sense, for that is better than inaction. An idler will only meet his end the sooner for his idleness. But while acting, remember that action leads to bondage unless it is performed in a spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice (*yajna*) means exerting oneself for the benefit of others, in a word, service. And where service is rendered for service's sake, there is no room for attachment, likes and dislikes. Perform such a sacrifice; render such service. When Brahma created the universe, He created sacrifice along with it, as it were, and said to mankind: 'Go forth into the world; serve one another and prosper. Look upon all creatures as gods. Serve and propitiate those gods, so that being pleased they will be gracious to you and fulfil your wishes unasked.' Therefore understand that whoever enjoys the fruits of the earth, without serving the people and without having first given them their share, is a thief. And he who enjoys them after having given all creatures their share is entitled to such enjoyment and is thus freed from sin. On the other hand, those who labour only for themselves are sinners and eat the fruit of sin. It is a law of nature that creatures are sustained by food, food production depends on the rains, and the rains descend on the earth on account of *yajna*, that is to say, the labour of all creatures. There is no rain where there are no creatures, and it does rain where they are there. All live by labour; none can remain idle and live, and if this is true of the lower forms of life, it is still more applicable to man. Action takes its origin from Brahma and Brah the imperishable Brahman; therefore the imperisha present in all kinds of sacrifice or service. this chain of mutual service is a sinner and

Tuesday Morning

"When a man enjoys peace of mind and contentment, it may be said that there is nothing left for him to do. He does not stand to gain by action or by inaction. He has no personal interests to serve; and yet he must not cease to offer sacrifice. Therefore do your duty from day to day without entertaining likes and dislikes and in a spirit of detachment. He who acts in such a spirit enjoys the beatific vision. Then again, if even a selfless king like Janaka reached perfection all the while working for the good of the people, how can you behave in a way different from his? Whatever a good and great man does, common people imitate. Take My own case for instance. I have nothing to gain by action, and yet ceaselessly do I pour myself out in action. Hence it is that people too go on working more or less. But what would happen if I ceased to work? The world would collapse if the sun, the moon and the stars ceased to move. And it is I who set them in motion and regulate their activity. But there is a difference between My attitude and the attitude of the common man. I act in the spirit of perfect detachment while he harbours attachment and works in his own interest. If a wise man like you ceased to act, others too would do the same and their minds would be unsettled. Therefore do your duty without attachment, so that others might not cease to work and might gradually learn to work without attachment. Man is bound to work in obedience to and in conformity with his own nature. Only a fool thinks that he himself is the doer. To breathe is a part of man's nature; when an insect settles upon the eye, the eyelid moves of its own accord. And nobody says: 'I take in the air' or 'I move the eyelid'. In the same manner why should not all human actions be performed in accordance with the qualities of nature? Why should there be any egoism about it? In order that a man may be able thus to act naturally and without attachment, the best thing for him to do is to dedicate all his actions to Me and perform them without egoism as a mere instrument in My hands. When a man thus gets over selfishness, all his actions are natural and free from taint and he escapes many a trouble. Actions then have no binding force for him. Action being natural, it is sheer egoism to outrage nature and to claim to be inactive. The victim of such egoism will externally appear not to act, but his mind is always active in scheming. This is worse than external activity and has all the greater binding force.

"As a matter of fact the senses feel attraction and aversion for their respective objects. For instance the ears like to hear some things and do not like to hear other things. The nose likes to smell the rose, and does not like to smell dirt. This is also true of the other organs of sense. Therefore what man has to do is not to submit to these two robbers, namely, attraction and repulsion. If one wishes to escape their attentions, he must not go about in search of action. He must not hanker after this today, that tomorrow and the other thing the day after. But he should hold himself ready to render for the sake of God such service as falls to his share. Thus he will cultivate within himself the feeling that whatever he does is in fact an act of God and not his own, and his egoism will be a thing of the past. This is *svadharma* (one's own duty). One must stick to *svadharma*, for it is the best for oneself at any rate. *Paradharma* (another's duty) may appear to be better, but even so it should be looked upon as dangerous. *Moksha* (salvation) lies in embracing death while doing one's own duty."

When Krishna said that action performed by one who is free from likes and dislikes is sacrifice, Arjuna asked: "What is it that makes a man commit sin? Very often it seems as if he were driven to sin by some outsider against his own will."

Krishna replied: "The slave-drivers in this case are *kama* (desire) and *krodha* (anger). These are like blood brothers. If desire is not satisfied, anger is the inevitable consequence. One who is the slave of desire and anger is said to be inspired by *rajoguna* (the quality of passion), which is man's greatest enemy and against which he has to fight day in, day out. As dust hides a mirror, smoke suffocates a fire and the womb covers the embryo, even so anger deprives knowledge of its lustre and suffocates it. And desire is insatiable like fire, and taking possession of man's senses, mind and intellect, knocks him down. Therefore first control your senses, and then conquer the mind. When you have done this, the intellect also will obey your orders. For, though among the senses, the mind and the intellect, the mind is greater than the senses and the intellect is greater than the mind, the soul is the greatest of all. Man has no idea of his own strength or soul-force, and tends to believe that the senses, the mind and the intellect are not amenable to his control. But when once he has gained confidence in soul-force, everything else becomes easy as a matter of course. And desire, anger and their countless hosts hold no terror for him who has mastered the senses, the mind and the intellect."

[NOTE.] I call this chapter the key to an understanding of the *Gita*, and the gist of it is that life is given us for service and not for enjoyment. We have therefore to impart a sacrificial character to our lives. Intellectual assent to this proposition is only the first step, but such assent and conduct in terms of that assent are bound to rid our heart of its impurities in course of time. But what is real service? In order to obtain the right answer to this question, restraint of the senses is essential, as it gives us a clearer and clearer vision of the God of truth. Service rendered with selfish motives ceases to be sacrifice. Hence the urgent need for the spirit of detachment. When this is understood, all manner of controversies lose their meaning for us. 'Did Krishna really ask Arjuna to kill his relatives? Could such killing ever be a part of one's duty?' Questions like these are set at rest for ever. When detachment governs our actions, even the weapon raised in order to strike an enemy down falls out of our hand. But a mere pretence of detachment serves no useful purpose. If only we persevere in our effort, detachment may come to us perhaps the very first day, or maybe only after a thousand years. We must not worry over the time this takes, for the effort carries within itself the seeds of success. We must however be on our guard and make sure that it is a genuine effort, and that there is no self-deception. And this is certainly possible for us all.[1]

CHAPTER IV[2]

Monday Morning [*December 1, 1930*]

The Lord says to Arjuna: "The yoga of selfless action which I commend to you is an ancient truth; I am not propounding any new doctrine. I have declared it to you, as you are my devoted friend, in order to heal the conflict in your mind. Whenever goodness weakens and evil grows from strength to strength, I incarnate Myself and protect the good and destroy the wicked. Those who are aware of this power (*maya*) of Mine are confident that evil is bound to go under. I am always by the good man's side. He never strays from the strait and narrow path and he comes to Me at last, for he meditates on Me and hides himself in Me and thus is delivered from passion and anger and is purified by austerity and wisdom. As a man sows, so he reaps. None can escape from the operation of the laws I have made. I established the four *varnas* (classes, not castes) by the different distribution of qualities and actions. However I am not their

[1] This note has also appeared under the date of writing in Vol. XLIV, pp. 339-40.

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", November 27/December 3, 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 353-5.

author, for I do not desire the fruits of action and have nothing to do with the merit or demerit arising therefrom. This divine *maya* (course of action) is worth knowing. All activities prevalent in the world are subject to divine laws, and yet God is not defiled by them. Therefore He is, and also is not, their author. And a man who does likewise and acts in a spirit of detachment without being defiled by actions and by the yearning for their fruit is sure to be saved. In action he sees inaction and he understands at once what is wrong action. Wrong actions are all those that are inspired by desire and cannot be performed in the absence of desire, such for instance as theft, adultery and the like. These simply cannot be done in a spirit of detachment. Therefore those who do the duty that lies nearest without desire and scheming for the fruit of the action may be said to have burnt up their actions in the fire of wisdom (*jnana*). A man who has thus abandoned the attachment to the fruit of action is always contented, always independent. He has his mind under control. He gives up all his possessions. And his activity is natural like the bodily functions of a healthy individual. He is free from any pride or even consciousness that he is acting on his own. He has the realization that he is a mere instrument of the divine will. What does it matter whether he meets with success or with failure? He is neither elated by the one, nor unnerved by the other. All his work is done as a sacrifice (*yajna*), that is to say, as service to the world. He meditates upon God in all his actions and in the end comes to Him.

"There are many forms of sacrifice, the root of which lies in purity and service, such as, for instance, control of the senses, charity and *pranayama* (breath-control) practised with a view to self-purification. Knowledge of these can be acquired from a wise teacher (guru) through humility, earnestness and service. If anybody indulges in various activities which he thinks are *yajna*, without any understanding of what *yajna* is, he will only do harm to himself and to the world. It is therefore necessary that all actions should be performed intelligently. This wisdom (*jnana*) is not mere book-learning. In it there is no room for doubt. It begins with faith and ends in experience. It enables a man to see all beings in himself and to see himself in God so that everything appears to him to be actually informed by God. Such wisdom effects the salvation of the worst of sinners. It releases the seeker from the bondage of action, so that he is not affected by its results. There is nothing else in the world so holy as this wisdom. Therefore try to obtain it with a heart full of faith in

God and with the senses under control, so that you will enjoy perfect peace of mind."

[NOTE.] The third, the fourth and the following fifth chapter should be read together, as they explain to us what the yoga of selfless action (*anasakti*) is and what are the means of practising it. If these three chapters are properly understood, the reader will have less difficulty in tackling what follows. The remaining chapters deal in detail with the ways and means of achieving *anasakti*. We should study the *Gita* from this point of view, and if we pursue this study we shall find without much trouble a solution of the problems which confront us from day to day. This calls for daily practice. Let everybody try it. If for instance he is angry, let him remember the verse dealing with anger and subdue that enemy. Supposing we heartily dislike somebody, or are impatient or gluttonous or in doubt as to whether we should do or should not do something or other, all these difficulties can be solved with the help of Mother *Gita* if we have faith in it and give it constant study. Our daily recitation of the *Gita* as well as this series of letters is a means to this end.[1]

CHAPTER V[2]

December 9, 1930

Arjuna said: "You speak highly of knowledge, so that I am inclined to think that action is unnecessary. But then you also praise action, thus making me feel that unselfish performance of action is the thing to do. My mind will be at peace only if you tell me definitely which of the two is better."

The Lord replied: "Sannyasa means knowledge and karmayoga means selfless action. Both of them are good, but if I had to choose between the two, I should say that yoga or selfless action is better. The man who does not hate anyone or anything, does not long for anything and is free from the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, is a sannyasi (wise man, literally, one who renounces the world), no matter whether he is or is not a performer of action. He easily casts off the chain that binds him. Only the ignorant speak of wisdom and action as different, not the learned. The fruit of both is the same; both lead to an identical goal. Therefore he who sees them as one sees truly. The man of pure wisdom achieves his object by merely willing it, and has no need to perform an outward act. When

[1] This note has also appeared under the date of writing in Vol. XLIV, p. 355.

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 4/9-12-1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 371-4.

the city of Mithila was on fire, others were bound to rush to it and fight the fire. But King Janaka contributed to this fight by his mental determination only, for his servants were ready to obey his commands. If he had run about with a water-pot to quench the fire, he would only have done harm; others would have stared at him and failed to perform their own duty, or at the most would have rushed here and there with a view to the King's safety. But it is not given to every one of us to become a Janaka at once. It is indeed a very difficult task to reach a Janaka-like state. Only one in a million can reach it as the fruit of service extending over many lives, and it is not a bed of roses either. As a man goes on performing selfless action, his thought grows from strength to strength and he resorts less and less to external action. But he is hardly conscious of this change, and he has not this change in view either. He is devoted only to service, with the result that his power of rendering service increases to such an extent that he hardly seems to rest from service. And finally his service is limited to thought alone, just as an object in extraordinary motion seems to be at rest. It is obviously improper to say that such a man does nothing. But this lofty state can, as a rule, be only imagined, and not experienced. Hence my preference for karmayoga. Millions derive the fruit of sannyasa (wisdom, literally, 'renunciation') from selfless action alone. They would fall between two stools if they tried their hand at sannyasa. If they take to sannyasa, it is very likely that they will become hypocrites, and as they have ceased to perform action, they are lost altogether. But a man who has purified himself by means of selfless action, who has his mind and his senses under control and who has identified himself with all beings, loving them as himself—such a man stands apart from action although he is acting all the time, and is not bound by it. He talks, he walks, he takes part in normal human activity, but his activity seems to be merely a function of his organs of sense, and he himself seems to be doing nothing. The bodily functions of a physically healthy person are natural and spontaneous. His stomach for instance functions independently of him; he has not to bother about its functioning. Similarly a spiritually healthy person, though acting through his body, is not tainted by it and may be said to be doing nothing. Therefore a man should dedicate all his actions to Brahma (God) and perform them on His behalf, so that in spite of his activity he does not earn either merit or demerit and is untouched by either, like a lotus leaf which is untouched by water.

Tuesday Morning

"Therefore a yogi (man of selfless action), performing action with the body, mind and understanding in a spirit of detachment and without egotism, purifies himself and enters into peace. The non-yogi, on the other hand, being attached to the fruit of action, is a prisoner bound by his own desires. The yogi lives blissfully in the city with nine gates, that is, his body, having renounced all actions by his mind, and realized that there is nothing at all that he himself is doing or getting done. The man with a purified soul does not commit sin, nor does he do any meritorious deed. He who acts in a spirit of detachment, having destroyed his egotism and renounced the fruit of action, becomes a mere machine moving at the will and pleasure of the Master Mechanic or an instrument in the hands of God. The question, therefore, of his earning merit or demerit does not arise. On the other hand, the ignorant man is always counting his merit and demerit, and sinking deeper and deeper into the pit, so that in the end the only thing he has earned is demerit. But as regards the man who destroys his own ignorance by knowledge from day to day, his spontaneous actions grow purer and purer, and appear perfect and meritorious in the world's eyes. He sees all things with an equal eye. He is equi-minded towards a learned and humble Brahma-knowing Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a degraded human being who is worse than a beast. That is to say, he serves them all with equal devotion. He does not honour any one of them or treat another with contempt. The man of selfless action holds himself to be the world's debtor, and he repays what he owes to everyone else and does him full justice. Here on earth he takes the creation captive and is filled with the spirit of the Supreme. He is not elated if anybody does something pleasant; nor is he pained if foul abuse is poured upon him. The man attached to the world seeks happiness from outside himself. On the other hand, he who acts in a spirit of selfless detachment discovers the spring of eternal peace in himself, having withdrawn his mind from external objects. All sensual pleasures are a source of pain. One should resist the rush of desire, anger and the like. The selfless yogi is constantly engaged in doing good to all creatures. His mind is free from doubt. He is not of the world though he is in the world. He turns his eyes inward by means of *pranayama* (control of breath), etc., and conquers desire, fear and anger. He knows Me alone to be the supreme Lord of all, the Friend, and the recipient of sacrificial offerings, and enters into My peace."

CHAPTER VI[1]

Tuesday Morning, December 16, 1930

The Lord said: "The man who does his duty without any selfish desire for fruit may be called a sannyasi as well as a yogi. But he who abstains from action altogether is only an idler. The root of the matter is that one should not allow his mind to flit from one object of desire to another and from that to a third. He who would practise yoga, i.e., evenness of temper (samatvam), cannot but perform action. The man who has achieved such evenness of temper will be serene, because his mere thoughts are charged with the strength of action. A yogi is one who is not attached to the objects of sense or to action and whose mind has ceased to roam restlessly.

"A man can be saved or ruined by himself alone. Therefore he becomes his own friend or his own enemy as the case may be. To one who has subdued his mind, his soul is a friend; while the soul is an enemy for him who has failed to achieve self-control. The test for self-control is that heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour do not disturb one's inner serenity. He is a yogi who is a man of knowledge as well as experience, who is unwavering and master of his senses and to whom gold, stone and earth seem all alike. He regards with an equal eye friend and foe, sinner and saint. With a view to attaining this state a man should stabilize his mind, divest it of all sensual desires, and meditate in solitude on the Supreme Self. It is not enough to practise yogic *asanas* (postures), etc. In order to achieve evenness of temper, one must scrupulously keep the major observances (*vratas*), such as *brahmacharya* (chastity) and the like. A man who thus takes his place on a firm seat, keeps the observances and concentrates his mind on God, enters into perfect peace.

"This equanimity is not for one who overeats or merely fasts, nor for one who is too much addicted to sleep or to vigils. Its seeker has to keep a sense of proportion in all his actions such as eating and drinking, sleeping and keeping awake. To overeat one day and fast the next day, to oversleep for a day and keep a vigil the next, to work hard for a day and pass the next in idleness is no characteristic of a yogi. The yogi is stable-minded at all times, and is without effort free from all desires. He is like an unflickering lamp burning in a windless place. He is not tossed to and fro by dramatic events on the world-stage or by his

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 13/16-12-1930; *vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 1-3.

own brain waves. Such mental poise can be acquired by slow but steady effort. The mind is fickle and restless, but it should be gradually stabilized, for a man can have peace of mind only when he is firm of understanding. In order thus to stabilize the mind, he should constantly fix it on the soul. He will then see all beings in himself and himself in all beings, for he will see Me in all beings and all beings in Me. He who is absorbed in Me, and sees Me everywhere ceases to be himself, so that he is at all times attuned to Me irrespective of what he is doing, and is incapable of sin."

Yoga thus described seemed to Arjuna to be a tall order, and he exclaimed: "How is one to achieve such equanimity? The human mind is restless like a monkey, and as difficult to control as the wind. How is it to be curbed?"

The Lord replied: "You are right. But if a man earnestly sets about conquering attachment and aversion, yoga will not be difficult for him to practise. But it should be clear to you that it is not for one who cannot control his mind."

Then Arjuna posed another question: "Supposing a man has faith, but is lax in his effort and is thus unsuccessful in perfecting himself, what happens to him? Is he destroyed like a broken cloud in the sky?"

The Lord said: "Such a man of faith is never lost, for no one who takes the right path ever comes to an evil end. After death he lives for a time in some celestial world according to his merit and is then reborn on the earth into a holy family. But such a birth is difficult to obtain. He then regains the mental impressions developed in his former lives, and struggling harder for perfection, reaches the supreme goal. Thus making an assiduous effort some attain equanimity soon, while others do so after a number of lives in accordance with the measure of their faith and endeavour. This evenness of temper is superior to asceticism, to knowledge and to sacred rites, for these latter are after all only means to the end of equanimity. Do you therefore become even-minded and a yogi. And even among yogis hold him to be the best who dedicates his all to Me and worships Me alone in full faith."

[NOTE.] *Pranayama* (control of breath) and *asanas* (yogic postures) are referred to appreciatively in this chapter, but we should remember that at the same time the Lord has stressed the need for *brahmacharya*, i.e., keeping the observances calculated to take us nearer and nearer to God. It should be clearly understood that the mere practice of *asanas* and the like can never

take us to the goal of evenmindedness. *Asanas* and *pranayama* may be of some slight help in steadying the mind and making it single-purposed, provided that they are practised to that end. Otherwise they are no better than other methods of physical training. They are very useful indeed as physical exercise and I believe that this type of exercise is good for the soul, and may be performed from a bodily standpoint. But I have observed that these practices do only harm when indulged in for the acquisition of supernormal powers (*siddhi*) and the performance of miracles. This chapter should be studied as a summary of the teaching in the preceding three chapters. It cheers us up in our spiritual struggle. We should never be down-hearted and give up the endeavour to reach evenness of temper.[1]

CHAPTER VII[2]

Tuesday Morning [December 23, 1930]

The Lord said: "O King, I will tell you how a man who devotes his whole mind to Me, takes refuge in Me and practises karmayoga can have perfect knowledge of Me free from the shadow of a doubt. I will declare to you this knowledge based on experience, which having been known, nothing more here remains to be known. Hardly one from among thousands strives to acquire this knowledge, and perhaps one only of these strivers makes a success of it.

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and egoism—this is the eightfold composition of My *prakriti* (nature). This is the lower nature; the other is higher nature, that is, life. This world is born of these two natures, that is to say, from the coming together of body and soul. Therefore I am the cause of the origin and destruction of all things. As pearls are strung on a thread, even so is the world held together by Me. Thus I am the taste in the waters, the light in the sun and the moon, the syllable 'Om' in the Vedas, the sound in ether, the spirit of enterprise in men, the sweet smell in the earth, the brightness in fire, the life in all that lives, the austerity of ascetics, the intelligence of the intelligent, the pure strength of the strong, and the craving of all beings which does not run counter to righteousness. In short you should understand that all that belongs to the states of *sattva*[3], *rajas*[4] and *tamas*[5] proceeds from Me, and depends upon Me alone. People deluded by these three qualities (*gunas*) do not

[1] This note has also appeared under the date of writing in Vol. XLV, p. 2.

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 18/23-12-1930; *vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 19-25.

[3], [4] & [5] Harmony, passion, sloth; or rhythm, activity, inertia

recognize Me Who am imperishable. My *maya* made of these qualities is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in Me pass beyond this *maya*, that is, the three *gunas*. Foolish evil-doers cannot think of coming to Me even in their dreams. Being steeped in illusion, they roam in darkness and do not acquire knowledge. But the doers of good deeds worship Me. Some of them do so in order to obtain relief in their distress; others seek for knowledge of Me. A third group are inspired by a desire to get something for themselves while others worship Me with understanding, thinking it to be their duty. Worship of Me means service of My creation. This service is rendered by some because of their misery, by others in order to gain some advantage, by a third group out of curiosity as regards the outcome of such activity and by a fourth group who know what they are about and for whom service of others is something that they cannot do without. These last are My wise devotees, dearer to Me than all the rest of them. Or rather they know Me best and are nearest to Me. Their wisdom is the fruit of a quest extending over a number of lives, and when they have acquired this wisdom, they see nothing in the world except Me, Vasudeva. But those who are smitten by a variety of desires resort to other deities. I alone, however, am the giver of rewards commensurate with the devotion of each. The achievement too of these devotees of limited understanding is limited, but they rest content with it. These men in their ignorance imagine that they know Me through the senses. They do not realize that My imperishable and supreme form is beyond the reach of the senses and cannot be grasped with the hands, the ears, the nose, the eyes. Thus the ignorant do not recognize Me though I am the Creator of all things. This is my *yogamaya* (creative power). Pleasure and pain are the necessary consequence of likes and dislikes and keep mankind under the influence of delusion. But those who have freed themselves from delusion and purified their thoughts and actions hold firmly to their vows and offer Me constant worship. They know Me in the form of perfect Brahman (the Absolute) as well as of individual selves embodied as various kinds of creatures (*adhyatma*), and My creative action (karma). Those who thus know Me as the One who governs the material (*adhibhuta*) and the divine (*adhidaiva*) aspects and the sacrifices (*adhiyajna*) and have attained evenness of temper, are released from the bondage of birth and death after they have died. Because they have acquired the knowledge of reality their mind ceases to dwell on trivialities; they see the whole universe to be filled with the spirit of God and are absorbed in Him."

CHATPER VIII[1]

Monday Morning, December 29, 1930

Arjuna asked: "You spoke of 'Brahman' (the Absolute), '*adhyatma*,' 'karma', '*adhibhuta*', '*adhidaiva*' and '*adhiyajna*', but I do not understand the meaning of all these words. Again you say that at the hour of death you are revealed to those who know you as *adhibhuta*, etc., and have attained evenness of temper. Please explain all this to me."

The Lord replied: "Brahman is the imperishable supreme aspect of God, and *adhyatma* is the individual soul living in the body of all beings as the doer and the enjoyer. Karma is the process through which all beings come into existence, or in other words, the process of creation. *Adhibhuta* is Myself as the perishable body, and *adhiyajna* is the individual soul purified through sacrifice. Thus whether as the body or as the foolish soul or as the purified soul or as Brahman, it is I who am everywhere. And never doubt this that he who meditates on Me in all these aspects at the hour of death, forgets himself, is careful of nothing and desirous of nothing will be united with Me. Whatever a man constantly dwells on in his mind and remembers at the time of death is realized by him. Therefore at all times you should remember Me and set your mind and heart upon Me and you will surely come to Me. You may say that it is hard thus to stabilize the mind. But you take it from Me that one can become single-minded by daily practice and constant endeavour, for as I told you just now, all embodied beings are in the essence Myself in various forms. For this he should prepare himself from the very first so that his mind does not go astray at the time of death, but is steeped in devotion, keeps the life force (*prana*) steady, and thinks only of Me as the Omniscient, the Ancient, the Ruler, the subtle supporter of all and dispeller of ignorance like the sun which drives darkness away.

"This supreme state is known to the Vedas as *Akshara* (the Imperishable) Brahman and is reached by sages who have freed themselves from likes and dislikes. All who desire to reach it observe *brahmacharya*, i.e., keep body, mind and speech under control and give up all objects of sense in these three ways. Men and women who die, having controlled the senses and uttering the sacred syllable 'Om' and remembering Me as they depart, reach

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 27/30-12-1930; *vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 37-9.

the supreme state. Their mind is never distracted by other thoughts, and when they have thus come to Me, they are not reborn into this painful condition. To come to Me is the only means of breaking the vicious circle of birth and death.

"Men measure time by the human span of a hundred years, and during that period do thousands of questionable deeds. But time is infinite. A thousand *yugas* (ages) make up the day of Brahma; compared with it a human day or even a hundred years of human life are as nothing. What is the use of counting such infinitesimal measures of time? Human life is as only a moment in the in finite cycle of time. It is up to us therefore to think of God alone to the exclusion of all else. How can we afford to run after momentary pleasures? Creation and dissolution have gone on unceasingly during Brahma's day and night and will do so in future too.

"Brahma who creates and dissolves beings is only an aspect of Me. He is the unmanifested which cannot be perceived by the senses. Beyond this unmanifested there is yet another unmanifested aspect of Mine of which I have spoken to you. He who reaches it is not reborn, for there is no day or night so far as this is concerned. This is a calm and immovable aspect, which can be realized only by single-minded devotion. It supports and pervades the whole universe.

"It is said that one who dies in the bright half of the month during *Uttarayana* (the northward movement of the sun from January to July) comes to Me if he is mindful of Me at the last moment, and that he who dies in the dark half of the month during *Dakshinayana* (the southward movement from July to January) is reborn into the world. '*Uttarayana*' and the 'bright fortnight' here may be interpreted to mean the path of selfless service; and '*Dakshinayana*' and the 'dark half of month' to mean selfishness. The path of service is the path of knowledge, and the path of selfishness is the path of ignorance. He who treads the path of knowledge is released from the bondage of birth and death, while he who takes the path of ignorance becomes a bondslave. After having realized the difference between the two, who would be so foolish as to prefer to walk the way of ignorance? All men should learn to discriminate between the paths, renounce all fruits of merit, act in a spirit of detachment and discharge their duty with all their heart and soul, and thus endeavour to reach the supreme state described by Me."

CHAPTER IX[1]

Monday Morning [January 5, 1931]

Having described the lofty state of a yogi in the last verse of the preceding chapter, the Lord now naturally proceeds to sing the glory of *bhakti* (devotion). For the yogi in terms of the *Gita* is neither a dry-as-dust man of knowledge, nor a devotee carried away by his own enthusiasm, but a selfless performer of action imbued with the spirit of wisdom as well as devotion.

So the Lord said: "As you are free from hatred, I shall now tell you the secret of wisdom, a knowledge of which will contribute to your welfare. This is the holy knowledge above all other and is easy to translate into action. Those who have no faith in it fail to find Me. Men cannot perceive My unmanifested form by their senses; yet it pervades the universe. It supports the universe; the universe does not support it. Again in a sense it may be said that all these beings are not in Me, and I am not in them. Although I am the source of all beings and their sustainer, they are not in Me and I am not in them; for in ignorance they do not know Me and are not devoted to Me. Know this to be My divine mystery.

"But though it seems as if I am not in these beings, I am like the air moving everywhere. All creatures pass into My nature at the end of a cycle and are reborn at the beginning of creation. These acts are Mine, but they do not bind Me, for I act in a spirit of detachment and am indifferent as to the fruit they bear. These events happen as such is My nature. But people do not recognize Me in such a guise and deny My existence altogether. They entertain vain aspirations, perform vain actions and are full of ignorance, so that they can be said to partake of the nature of demons. But those who abide in the divine nature know and worship Me as the imperishable Creator. They are firm in their determination. They are always striving for virtue, praising Me, and meditating on Me. Others again believe Me to be one or to be many. There are countless attributes of Me; therefore those who believe Me to be many think of different attributes as so many different faces of Mine. But one and all, they are My devotees.

"I am the intention to offer a sacrifice, I the sacrifice itself, I the offering made to the spirits of the fathers, I the herb, I the sacred verse (*mantra*), I the oblation, I the fire to which it is

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 1/6-1-1931; *vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 64-7.

offered. I am the Father of this world, I the Mother, the supporter and the Grandsire, the object of knowledge, the syllable 'Om', *Rig-Veda*, *Sam-Veda* and *Yajur-Veda*. I am the end of the pilgrim's path, the sustainer, the Lord, the Witness. I am the shelter, the lover, the origin, the dissolution, heat and cold, being and non-being. Those who perform the rites mentioned in the Vedas do so in order to gain their fruit. They may thus attain the world of heaven, but they have to return to the world of mortals and to die. But if a man meditates upon Me with an undistracted mind and worships Me alone, I bear all his burdens, supply all his needs and protect his possessions. Some others who worship other deities with faith in their hearts are victims of ignorance, but they are really worshipping Me for I am the Lord of all sacrifices. However, they do not know Me in My comprehensive nature and therefore are unable to reach the supreme state. Worshippers of the gods go to the world of the gods, the ancestor-worshippers to the world of the fathers and those who worship the spirits go to the spirits, while those who worship Me with the right approach come to Me. I accept the offering of love made by seekers, even if it be only a leaf or a flower. Therefore whatever you do, do it only as an offering to Me, so that your responsibility for the good and evil results will cease altogether. As you will have renounced all the fruits of action, there will be no more births and deaths for you. I am the same to all beings; none is hateful or dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion are in Me, and I am in them. This is not partiality but only the natural consequence of their devotion. Devotion indeed works wonders. He who worships Me in utter devotion becomes a saint even if he has been a sinner. As darkness vanishes before the sun, a man abandons his evil ways as soon as he comes to Me. Therefore know for certain that My devotee shall not perish. He becomes a man of religion and enters into My peace. Those who are born in the so-called lower castes and illiterate women, Vaishyas and Sudras who take refuge in Me come to Me. It goes without saying that so do Brahmins and Kshatriyas who lead a holy life. Every devotee enjoys the fruit of his devotion. Therefore you who have been born in this unsubstantial world should worship Me and work out your salvation. Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer your sacrifices for My sake, prostrate yourself before Me. And if you are intent on Me and reduce yourself to zero by attuning yourself to Me, you are sure to come to Me."

Tuesday Morning, [January 6, 1931]

NOTE. We learn from this Chapter that devotion (*bhakti*) means attachment (*asakti*) to God. This is the royal road to the cultivation of a selfless spirit. Therefore we are told at the very beginning that devotion is the sovereign yoga and is easy to practise. It is easy to practise if it takes hold of our heart, but hard going if it does not. Hence it has been described as something for which we have to offer our life itself as the price. But he who has plunged into it enjoys perfect bliss though it scares the mere spectator. Sudhanva[1] was laughing as he lay in the boiling oil while the bystanders were seized with terror and anxiety. The 'untouchable' Nanda is said to have danced as he was tried by the ordeal of fire.[2] We need not bother whether or not these are true stories. But the fact is that a man reaches such a state of calmness and imperturbability when he is absorbed in something or other. He forgets himself. But who would set his heart on anything except God? 'Do not prefer the bitter *neem* to sugar-cane or the glow-worm to the sun and the moon.' The ninth chapter thus shows that renunciation of the fruit of action is impossible without devotion (*bhakti*). Its last verse sums up the whole chapter and in a word means, "Seeking nothing, give yourself utterly to Me."

CHAPTER X[3]

Monday Morning, January 12, 1931

The Lord said: "Hear once more what I say with a view to the welfare of devotees. Even gods and great sages do not know my beginning, for the very simple reason that I am without beginning myself and am the origin of the universe including gods and sages. The wise man who knows Me to be unborn and without beginning is liberated from all sins, for when he realizes Me as such and himself as My child or as part and parcel of Me, he overcomes the human liability to sin. Ignorance of one's real nature is the root of sin.

"As all beings derive from Me, so do the various natures distributed to them, such as for instance forgiveness, truth, joy

[1] Son of King Hansadhwaj of Champavati in the *Mahabharata*. He was thrown into boiling oil for disobeying his father who was an atheist; but he came out unscathed because of his devotion to God.

[2] Nanda was not subjected to any ordeal. The legend is that he went up in flames as he entered the shrine.

[3] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 12-1-1931; *vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 85-6.

and sorrow, birth and death, fear and fearlessness. Those who know all these to be My glorious manifestations easily become even-minded, as they cease to be egotistic. Their heart is fixed on Me. They dedicate their all to Me. I am the only subject of their conversation. They glorify Me and live in happiness and contentment. To these loving worshippers always aware of Me I grant the power of understanding, by means of which they come to Me."

Arjuna then praised the Lord: "You are the Supreme Brahman, the highest Abode, and the Lord. You yourself say that sages worship you as the First of the Gods, the Birthless, the All-pervading. O Lord, O Father, no one knows your real nature; it is known to you alone. Now please tell me your glorious manifestations, and explain to me how I may recognize you by meditation."

The Lord replied: "There is no end to My divine manifestations, but I shall name the chief of these only. I am the *atman* (soul) dwelling in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of them all. Of the Adityas I am Vishnu. Among the lights I am the light-giving sun. Of the Maruts (wind-gods) I am Marichi. Among the stars I am the moon. Of the Vedas I am the *Sama-Veda*. Of the gods I am Indra. Of the sense-organs I am the mind. Of beings I am consciousness. Of the Rudras I am Shankara (Siva). Of the Yakshas and Rakshasas I am Kubera. Of the Daityas (demons) I am Prahlada. Of beasts I am the lion. Of birds I am the eagle. Indeed I am even the gambling of the cheats. Whatever, good or evil, happens in this world happens only by My permission. Realizing this, men should give up their pride and steer clear of evil, for I am the dispenser of the fruits of their good and bad deeds. You should realize that only a single fraction of Mine sustains the entire universe."

CHAPTER XI[1]

Monday Morning and Afternoon [January 19, 1931]

Arjuna, asking the Lord for a favour, said: "O Supreme Lord, by teaching me the truth about the soul, you have dispelled my ignorance. You are All, the Creator and the Destroyer, being Imperishable yourself. If possible, please let me have a vision of your divine Form."

The Lord said: "There are thousands of my divine forms in various colours. The Adityas[2], the Vasus[3] and the Rudras[4]—

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 14/19-1-1931; *vide* Vol. XLV, pp. 102-5.

[2],[3]&[4] Various classes of gods

all are unified in My body, as well as all things, animate and inanimate. But you cannot see this My form with those fleshly eyes. Therefore I give you divine sight with which to see Me."

Sanjaya said to Dhritarashtra: "O king, speaking thus to Arjuna, the Lord revealed to him His marvellous form which defies description. We see a single sun in the sky every day, but supposing a thousand suns were blazing in the sky, the glory of what Arjuna saw was more dazzling than their accumulated light. The ornaments and the weapons of that form were similarly divine. Arjuna's hair then stood erect. And he spoke, shaking all over."

Arjuna said: "O God, I see everything and everybody within your body. Brahma and Siva are there, and so are the sages and the holy serpents. I see you with countless arms and faces, and find no beginning, middle or end. You shine like a mass of insufferable light, and blaze like fire. You are the ultimate foundation of the universe, the Ancient of Days, and the guardian of eternal law. Wherever I look, I see parts of your body. The sun and the moon are your eyes as it were. You pervade heaven and earth. Your splendour burns up the universe. This world is seized with awe. The gods, the sages, and the *siddhas* —all are standing with clasped hands and sing your praise. On seeing this stupendous form and brilliance I lose my nerve. My patience and peace are gone. O God, have mercy on me. I see these people rush into your mouth frightful with tusks as moths fly into a flame and you crush them to powder. Who are you with such an awful form? I cannot understand your ways."

The Lord said: "I am Time, the destroyer of worlds. You may or may not fight, but the warriors on both the sides are bound to perish. You are only an instrument of the divine will."

Arjuna said: "O God, home of all the worlds, you are the Imperishable, Being and non-Being and what is beyond either of them. You are the First of the Gods, the Ancient of Days; you are the refuge of the world. You are the one thing which is to be known. You are Vayu (wind), Yama (the God of Death and Judgment), Agni (fire) and Prajapati (the Creator). Hail to you a thousand times. Now please show me your original form again."

The Lord then said: "I showed My world-wide Form to you, because I love you. You have seen today something the vision of which cannot be won by Vedic or any other studies, rituals, alms or austerities. Do not be bewildered because you have seen it. Cast away fear, be calm and see my familiar form. That shape of Mine which you have seen is hard to see even for the gods and can be seen only by pure devotion. Whoever works for Me,

makes Me his supreme good, becomes my devotee, frees himself from attachment and loves all beings, comes to me."

NOTE. This chapter, like the tenth, I have deliberately cut short. This one is full of poetry and therefore should be read frequently either in the original or in translation, so that we may be imbued with the spirit of devotion. Whether we are or not thus imbued can be found by applying the acid test mentioned in the last verse. Devotion is impossible in the absence of total self-surrender and all-embracing love. Self-surrender and a sense of solidarity with all living beings become easy of attainment if we meditate on God as world-destroying time into whose gaping mouths the universe rushes to its doom. This fate is bound to overtake us too all of a sudden, whether we wish for it or not. Thus all distinctions of small and big, high and low, man and woman, men and the lower animals, disappear. Seeing that we are all a mere morsel in the mouth of God as the Destroyer, we should become humble and reduce ourselves to zero and cultivate friendship with everyone else. If we do this, we shall cease to be afraid of this terrible Form of God. On the other hand it will give us peace of mind.

CHAPTER XII[1]

Tuesday Morning, November 4, 1930

Arjuna asks the Lord: "Some devotees adore a personal (*sakara*) God while others worship the Absolute (*nirakara*). Which of these two courses is better?"

The Lord replies: "Those who fix their minds on Me (as the One Life in all) with perfect faith and are absorbed in Me are My devotees indeed. But those who worship the Absolute and restrain and subdue their senses are equiminded towards all living beings and serve them without looking on some as of a superior and others as of an inferior grade—they also will come to Me. Neither of these two classes of devotees is superior to the other. But a full realization of the Absolute is almost impossible for an embodied being. The Absolute is devoid of all attributes and thus difficult for men even to imagine. Therefore they are all worshippers of a personal God, whether they are aware of it or not. Do you therefore place your mind in Me (the personal God in the universal form) and offer Me your all. If this is not possible, try to restrain the aberrations of the mind; that is to say,

[1] This letter, the first in this series, was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", October 30/November 4, 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 274-7.

by observing the *yamas* and *niyamas*, and with the help of *pranayama* and yogic exercises, obtain control over the mind. If even this is beyond your capacity, perform all actions for My sake, so that your delusion will be destroyed, and you will be imbued with the spirit of detachment and devotion. If you cannot do even this, renounce the fruits of action, that is, cease to have a desire for the fruits of action, and do the task which is allotted to you. A man can never have any say as regards the fruit of his action, as the nature of the fruit is determined by a number of independent factors. Be you therefore a mere instrument in My hands. I have thus described four methods, none of which is superior to the others. You may adopt any one of the four you like. It may seem as if the path of knowledge (hearing the doctrine, pondering over it, etc.) is easier to take than that of *yamas*, *niyamas*, *pranayama*, *asanas*, etc. Meditation in worship is easier still and the renunciation of the fruit the easiest of all. But the same method is not equally well suited for all. And some seekers have to adopt all the four methods, which are inter-connected. You must become a devotee one way or other; you may take any path that leads to this destination.

"Let me tell you what the true devotee is like. He does not hate or bear ill will to any living creature. He looks on all with love and compassion. He is free from the delusion of 'I' and 'mine'. He reduces himself to zero. Pleasure and pain are equally acceptable to him. He forgives the wrong-doer even as he expects to be forgiven himself. He is always contented with his lot, and is unshakable in his resolve. He dedicates his intellect and mind and all to Me. He never molests his fellow-creatures; these are therefore never afraid of him. He does not allow himself to become perturbed by the world. He is free from exultation, sorrow, anger, fear and the like. He seeks nothing for himself. He is pure and skilful in action. He renounces every undertaking.[1] Although he is firm in his resolve, he is indifferent as regards the success or failure of his action; that is to say, he is not anxious about its result. He is alike to friend and foe. Honour and insult are the same to him. He is silent and content

[1] In his "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 13/17-11-1930 (*vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 317-8), Gandhiji had explained: "The devotee 'renounces all undertakings'. This means the devotee will not draw up schemes of future expansion. For example, if a merchant who deals in cloth now has any plans of selling fire-wood as well in the future, or if he, having one shop only, thinks of opening five more shops, that would be *arambha* (undertaking) on his part, and the devotee will have none of it. This principle is applicable to service of the nation as well. For

with what comes. He moves freely as if he were alone. He has a steady mind at all times and places. A devotee who behaves like this in faith is dear to Me."[1]

CHAPTER XIII

Monday Morning [January 25, 1932]

The Lord said: "*Kshetra* (the Field) is another name for the human body and *kshetrajna* means one who knows the Field. Understand Me as the knower of the Field in all bodies. Real knowledge means discrimination between the Field and the knower of the Field.

"The five great elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air and ether, individuality (*ahamkara*), intellect, the unmanifest, the ten senses[2], mind, the five sense-objects, desire and hatred, pleasure and pain, *sanghata* (the power of combination inherent in the constituents of the body), consciousness and cohesion,—these constitute the Field with its modifications. Knowledge of these is essential, as they have to be renounced. Wisdom is the foundation on which such renunciation can be based. Wisdom here means and includes humility, unpretentiousness, non-violence, forgiveness, rectitude, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-restraint, indifference to sense-objects, absence of egoism, insight into the evil of birth, death, old age, disease and pain, detachment from wife and children, hearth and home, friends and relations, equimindedness to good and bad fortune, whole-hearted devotion to God, love of solitude, dislike for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures in company with others, thirst for

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instance, a worker in the khadi department today will not take up cow-keeping tomorrow, agriculture the day after and medical aid on the fourth day. He will do his best in whatever has come to him. When I am free from egoism, nothing remains for me to do.

"'The Lord has bound me with a cotton thread; I am His, no matter where He leads me. I have been stabbed with the dagger of love.' A devotee's every activity is planned by God. It comes to him as in the natural course of things. He therefore rests content with, 'this, that or anything else' (येन केन चित्।) This is the meaning of 'renouncing all undertakings'. The devotee does not cease to work; indeed he is nothing if not a worker. He only ceases to think needless thoughts about his work. It is these that he has to renounce."

[1] The chapters which follow are from M.M.U./II.

[2] The five organs of perception, viz., ears, skin, eyes, palate and nose, and the five organs of action, viz., tongue, feet, hands and the organs of evacuation and reproduction

knowledge of the soul, and at last the beatific vision. And the reverse of this is ignorance.

"Now let me tell you something about that which has to be known with a view to salvation. That is beginningless supreme Brahman. Brahman is beginningless because it is unborn and was there when there was nothing. It is neither *sat* (existent) nor *asat* (non-existent) but beyond them both. But from another standpoint it can be called *sat*, because it is eternal. Human beings cannot recognize it as such; therefore it is said to be beyond even *sat*. It pervades the whole universe. It may be said to have a thousand hands and feet, and though it seems to have hands and feet, it is devoid of the organs of sense for it does not need these organs. Sense organs are transitory while Brahman is eternal. And although being all-pervasive and all-sustaining, it may be said to be enjoying the qualities (*gunas*), it is free from them. Where there are *gunas*, there is change (*vikara*), but Brahman is changeless. It may be said to be outside all beings, because it is out for those who do not know it. And it is within all beings as it is all-pervading. Similarly it is both moving and unmoving. It is subtle and hence imperceptible. It is distant as well as near. It is undivided in the sense that it is imperishable though name (*nama*) and form (*rupa*) perish, but it also seems to be divided as we say that it is within all creatures. It creates, preserves and destroys. It is the light of lights beyond darkness, and the end of all knowledge. Brahman which is planted in every heart is *jneya*, the one thing worth knowing. All knowledge is a means to the end of being united with it.

"God and his *maya* (nature) are both without beginning. Modifications (*vikaras*) are born of *maya* and these give rise to various kinds of action (*karma*). On account of *maya*, the soul experiences pleasure and pain and the fruit of merit (*punya*) and demerit (*papa*). He who, having realized this, does his duty in a spirit of detachment is not born again in spite of his activity, for he beholds the face of God in all faces, and seeing that not a leaf moves but by the divine will, he is free from egotism, understands that he is separate from the body and that the soul, though living in the body, remains by means of knowledge unaffected like the omnipresent ether."

Finished at about 2 p.m.

Not revised.

CHAPTER XIV[1]

Silence Day, January 25, 1932

The Lord said: "Once more I will teach you that supreme wisdom which enabled sages to reach the highest perfection. People who find that wisdom and do their duty accordingly are delivered from the cycle of births and deaths. O Arjuna, know Me to be the Father and Mother of all beings. The three *gunas* born of nature, viz., *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance) bind the soul down. They may be described respectively as the highest, the middling and the lowest. Of these *sattva* is pure and unsullied and gives light; it is therefore the source of happiness. *Rajas* arises from attachment and craving and makes a man indulge in all manner of activities. *Tamas* is rooted in ignorance and delusion and makes one negligent and indolent. In short, *sattva* makes for happiness, *rajas* for restlessness and *tamas* for sloth. Sometimes *sattva* prevails, overpowering *rajas* and *tamas*; at other times *rajas* prevails, overpowering *sattva* and *tamas*; at still other times *tamas* prevails, overpowering *sattva* and *rajas*. When the light of wisdom shines through all the activities of the body it may be known that *sattva* is increasing. Where greed, bustle, unrest and competition are observed, *rajas* is the ruler. And the predominance of *tamas* is characterized by ignorance, sloth and delusion. If *sattva* prevails in a man's life, he is born in the sinless worlds of the great sages after death. If *rajas* dominates his life, he is born among those who are attached to action. And if *tamas* is the ruling principle, he returns to the womb of the senseless. The fruit of *sattvik* action is purity, while the fruit of *rajas* is pain and the fruit of *tamas* is ignorance. A *sattvik* man rises to the higher regions; a *rajasik* person remains in this world, while a *tamasik* individual sinks to the underworld. When a man perceives no doer of action other than these qualities and knows Me who am beyond them he enters into My nature. When the dweller in the body has overcome the three qualities from which all bodies arise, he is freed from birth and death, old age and pain and drinks the nectar of eternal life."

On hearing that one who transcends the qualities makes such great progress on the pilgrim's path, Arjuna asked: "What are the marks of such perfection? How does such a perfect being conduct himself? And how does he cross over the qualities?"

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 23/25-1-1932; *vide* pp. 31-3.

The Lord replied: "A man is said to have risen above the qualities when he is not angry if the light and knowledge of *sattva* or the activity and bustle of *rajas* or the delusion and ignorance of *tamas* are there and is not wishful if they are not. He sits like one who is unconcerned and is not disturbed by the qualities. He stands apart unmoved, being aware that they are the doers of all actions. He is even-minded to pleasure and pain as well as to a lump of earth, a stone and gold. The pleasant and the unpleasant are alike to him. He is unaffected by either praise or blame. He is the same in honour and evil fame. He is alike to friend and foe. And he has abandoned all undertakings. Do not think that this is a goal you can never reach and that therefore you need not exert yourself. What I have described is the state of a perfect man. The way to it is to serve Me with single-minded devotion.

"From the third chapter onwards I have pointed out that a man cannot so much as even breathe without action (karma), from which no human being can ever hope to escape. He who would transcend the qualities should dedicate all his actions to Me, and cease to desire their fruits. If he does this, his actions will not be an impediment to his progress, for I am Brahman, *moksha*, the eternal dharma and joy for ever.

"When a man reduces himself to zero, he sees Me alone everywhere. He is *guna-atita* (one who has transcended the qualities)."

CHAPTER XV[1]

Night, January 31, 1932[2]

The Lord said: "This world is like an *ashvattha* (sacred fig) tree with roots above and branches below and with the Vedic hymns as its leaves. And he who knows it knows the Vedas. The branches of this cosmic tree nourished by the qualities shoot to heaven and sink to earth. Sense-objects are its sprouts. It is these things of the senses which bind the soul with the bonds of karma in the world of men. The real nature of this tree cannot be known here, nor its beginning, nor end, nor foundation.

"This strongly rooted cosmic tree should be cut down with the weapon of non-co-operation, so that the soul may rise to a higher world from which there is no return [to the world of mortals]. With this end in view a man should engage himself in the

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", January 28/ Fabruary 1, 1932; *vide* pp. 56-8.

[2] The source has "1931".

constant worship of the Ancient of Days, from whom all this activity (the cosmic process) seems to flow. The wise man who is free from pride and delusion, victorious over the vice of attachment and devoted to the Supreme Soul, who is free from cravings and to whom pleasure and pain are alike—that wise man reaches the state which is beyond all change, and which does not need to be illumined by the sun, the moon or fire. That is my Supreme abode.

"An eternal part of Myself tansformed into the individual soul in this world draws to itself the senses including the mind which reside in matter. When the soul enters the body or leaves it, it takes these senses with it even as the wind carries fragrance from its places. It enjoys sense-objects with the help of the ear, the eye, the senses of touch and taste, the nose and the mind. The ignorant cannot recognize it as it goes or stays or enjoys itself under the influence of the qualities, but the sages see it [with the eye of wisdom]. Striving yogis see it living in their own bodies, but those who have not achieved evenness of temper cannot see it even if they try.

"The light of the sun that illumines all the world, that which is in the moon and in fire—know that all that light is Mine. Permeating the soil[1] I sustain all living beings. I become the sap-producing moon and feed the plants. Becoming the fire of life in the bodies of all living creatures and being united with the life-breaths, I digest the four kinds of food. I abide in all hearts. From Me are memory and wisdom as well as their absence. I am that which is to be known by all the Vedas. So also I am the Author of Vedanta and the Knower of the Vedas.

"There may be said to be two kinds of personalities in this world, namely, *kshara* (the perishable) and *akshara* (the imperishable). The perishable is all beings; and the imperishable is I who am the same for ever. But beyond either is the highest spirit who is called the Supreme Soul, and who, pervading all, sustains the three worlds. This too is I. I therefore transcend the perishable and even the imperishable, and am known in the world as well as in the Vedas as the Supreme Reality. The wise man who recognizes Me as such knows all that need be known, and serves Me with his whole being.

"O sinless Arjuna, I have told you this most secret teaching. By knowing this a man becomes truly wise and reaches the shores of salvation."

[1] Literally, 'having entered their bodies'

CHAPTER XVI[1]

February 7, 1932

The Lord said: "I will now point out the distinction between the divine and the demoniacal natures. I have earlier described at length what is meant by divine nature but I will repeat its distinctive features. Among the signs of the divine are fearlessness, purity of heart, wisdom, evenness of temper, self-control, alms-giving, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, peacefulness, not speaking evil of others, compassion to all living beings, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, internal as well as external, freedom from malice and pride.

"Among the signs of the demoniacal are hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, anger, cruelty and ignorance.

"The divine nature leads to liberation while the demoniacal leads to bondage. O Arjuna, you are born with endowments of the divine nature.

"I will say something more about the demoniacal nature, so that people may easily give it up.

"Men of such a nature do not know what to do and what to refrain from doing. There is no purity or truth in them, so that they do not observe the rules of good conduct.

"They hold that the world is unreal, without basis or rule. For them sex is all the world so that they think of nothing except enjoyment of the objects of sense.

"They do horrible deeds. They are dull-witted. They hold fast to their wicked thoughts and all their activity is directed only to the destruction of the world. Their desires are insatiable. They are full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. They are thus plagued by innumerable cares. They want fresh sensual pleasures every day. They are 'ensnared in nooses of a hundred idle hopes', and by unlawful means amass wealth in order to gratify their desires.

" 'I got this today; I will get that tomorrow. I killed this one enemy today; I will also kill others. I am a man of might. I have great possessions. Who is my equal? With a view to fame I will sacrifice to the gods, give alms and make merry.' They say this to themselves with a chuckle, and being caught in the net of delusion, go to hell at last.

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 3/8-2-1932; *vide* pp. 74-7.

"Men with such a nature, given over to pride, speak ill of others and thus hate God who dwells in all hearts. They are therefore frequently born in the wombs of degraded parents.

"There are three gates to hell, leading to the ruin of the soul: lust, anger and greed. Therefore we should renounce them all. Turning aside from them, men go by the strait and narrow path and reach the highest state.

"He who disregards the scriptures composed of eternal principles and gives himself up to pleasure cannot attain happiness or peace characteristic of the right way.

"Therefore in deciding what you must do and what you must not do, you should acquire the knowledge of fundamental and immutable principles from wise men and think and act accordingly."

CHAPTER XVII[1]

February 14, 1932

Arjuna asked: "What happens to those who serve in faith, neglecting the prevailing code of conduct?"

The Lord replied: "There are three kinds of faith, characterized by *sattva, rajas* or *tamas* as the case may be. As is a man's faith, so is he.

"*Sattvik* men worship the gods; *rajasik* men worship demigods and demons; and *tamasik* men worship the spirits of the dead.

"The nature of a man's faith cannot be ascertained offhand. In order to assess it correctly, one must know the precise nature of his food, austerity, sacrifice and alms-giving.

"Foods which make for long life and increase the vital force, energy, strength and health are said to be *sattvik. Rajasik* foods are violently bitter, sour, hot or pungent and give rise to disease and aches and pains. And cooked food which is stale or gives out a bad smell and the leavings of others are said to be *tamasik.*

"The sacrifice which is offered as a matter of duty without expecting a reward and with mental concentration is said to be *sattvik.* A *rajasik* sacrifice is that in which a reward is desired and which is offered for outward show. And a *tamasik* sacrifice is one in which scriptural rules are disobeyed, no eatables or alms are given away and no hymns are chanted.

"Honouring the saintly purity, *brahmacharya* and non-violence constitute austerity of the body. Truthful, pleasant and beneficial speech as well as a study of the scriptures is austerity of

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 11/15-2-1932; *vide* pp. 95-6.

speech. And cheerfulness, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of motive—these are called austerity of the mind. Such austerity of the mind, body and speech as is practised without desire of fruit by men with an evenness of temper is said to be *sattvik*. Austerity practised for ostentation and with a view to gaining honour is said to be *rajasik*. And austerity done by obstinate fools with self-torture or with the object of hurting others is said to be *tamasik*.

"A gift 'made in due place, due time and to a fit recipient' without expecting a reward and with a feeling that it is right for a man to give is said to be *sattvik*. A gift made grudgingly with a view to getting something in return is regarded as *rajasik*. And the gift which is given in a contemptuous spirit, and without honour done to the recipient and without considering the proper time and place for it is said to be *tamasik*.

"Brahman is designated in the Vedas as *Om tat sat*. Therefore men of faith pronounce the sacred syllable 'Om' when they commence any rite of sacrifice, alms-giving or austerity. This single syllable stands for Brahman. *Tat* means *that*. And *sat* means *satya*, beneficient. That is to say, God is one, He alone is, He alone is truth and the benefactor of the world. He who offers a sacrifice, makes gifts or practises austerity with a realization of this truth and in a spirit of dedication is a man of *sattvik* faith. And he is free from blame if he knowingly or unknowingly does something different from the correct procedure in the spirit of dedication. But acts undertaken in the absence of such a spirit are said to be performed without faith and therefore are *asat* (unreal)."

CHAPTER XVIII[1]

February 21, 1932

Even after he had pondered over the teaching in all the previous Chapters, there was still a doubt in Arjuna's mind. So he said: "The sannyasa of the *Gita* seems to be different from renunciation as currently understood. Are sannyasa and *tyaga* really different?"

While resolving Arjuna's doubt in answer to this question, the Lord summarized the *Gita* doctrine in a concise manner: "Some actions are motivated by desire. Various activities are indulged in by men with a view to fulfilling various desires. These are called *kamya* actions. Then again there are certain necessary and natural actions such as breathing, eating, drinking, lying

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 19/21-2-1932; *vide* pp. 150-1.

down, sitting, etc., with a view to keep the body [a fit instrument of service]. And thirdly there are actions done with a view to serving others. Giving up *kamya* actions is sannyasa, and renunciation of fruits of all actions is *tyaga* as recommended to you all along.

"Some people maintain that there is evil, no matter how little, in all actions whatever. Even so, a man must not give up actions done with a view to *yajna* (sacrifice), that is to say, the service of others. Alms-giving and austerity are included in *yajna*. But even while serving others, a man should act in a spirit of detachment. Otherwise his activity is likely to be mixed up with evil.

"Renunciation owing to ignorance of duties that must be done is said to be inspired by *tamas*. Giving up any action merely because it involves physical suffering is said to be *rajasik*. But service rendered to others because of a feeling that it must be done and without the desire for the fruits is real *sattvik tyaga*. In this *tyaga* therefore there is no giving up of all actions, but only of the fruit of duties that must be done, and of course of other, that is, *kamya* actions. When a [wise] man acts in such a selfless spirit, all his doubts are dispelled, his motives are pure and he has no thought of personal comfort and discomfort.

"He who does not abandon the fruits of action must enjoy or put up with the natural consequences of his own acts, and is thus a bondslave for ever. But he who gives up the fruits of action achieves freedom.

"And why should a man feel attachment for action? It is idle for anybody to imagine that he himself is a doer. There are five causes for the accomplishment of all actions, namely, this body, the doer, the various instruments, efforts, and last but by no means the least, providence.

"Realizing this, a man should give up pride. He who does something without egoism may be said to be not doing it in spite of his doing it, for he is not bound by his action. Of a humble man who has reduced himself to zero it may be said that he does not kill though he kills. This does not mean that the man in spite of his humility may kill and yet be unaffected by the killing. For no occasion can arise for such a man to indulge in violence.

"There are three things that inspire action: knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower. And there are three constituents of action: the organ, the deed and the doer. The thing to be done is the object of knowledge; the method of doing it is knowledge and he who knows it is the knower. After he has thus

received an impulse to action, he performs an action in which the senses serve as instruments. Thought is thus translated into action.

"That by which a man is able 'To see one changeless Life in all the lives' and to realize the essential unity that underlies all diversities is *sattvik* knowledge. In *rajasik* knowledge one holds that there are different souls in different creatures, while in *tamasik* knowledge a man does not know a thing and imagines that everything is mixed up without rhyme or reason.

"Similarly there are three kinds of action. Action in which there are no likes and dislikes and no desire for personal gains is *sattvik*. That in which there are desires for enjoyment, egoism and restlessness is *rajasik* action. And *tamasik* action is one in which no thought at all is given to personal capacity and consequential injury or violence and which is undertaken through delusion.

"So also there are three classes of doers. Of course having understood the action it could not be difficult to know the doer. A *sattvik* doer is free from attachment and egoism and yet firm and enterprising and is neither elated by success nor worried by failure. A *rajasik* doer is impassioned, greedy and violent, 'slave by turns of sorrow and of joy' and of course desires to obtain the fruit of his actions. And a *tamasik* doer is unsystematic, procrastinating, obstinate, malicious and indolent; in short, without an iota of self-culture.

"Intellect, firmness and happiness also are said to be of three kinds.

"The *sattvik* intellect is able properly to distinguish between action and non-action,

> What must be done, and what must not be done,
> What should be feared, and what should not be feared,
> What binds and what emancipates the soul.

The *rajasik* intellect tries to draw these distinctions but generally fails to do so correctly, while the *tamasik* intellect 'looks upon wrong as right and sees all things contrariwise of truth.'

"Firmness is the power of taking up some thing and sticking to it through thick and thin. It is more or less inherent in all things; otherwise the world could not subsist for a single moment. Firmness is *sattvik* when there is a constantly maintained balance between the activities of the mind, the vital airs (*pranas*) and the senses. The firmness by which a man holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth from attachment and with a view to personal advantage is *rajasik*. And firmness is *tamasik*,

wherewith the fool
Cleaves to his sloth, his sorrow and his fears,
His vanity and despair.

"*Sattvik* happiness is the
pleasure that endures,
Banishing pain for aye, bitter at first
As poison to the soul, but afterwards
Sweet as the taste of *amrit*.

It arises from true self-knowledge.

"*Rajasik* happiness arises from sensual enjoyment.
Sweet
As *amrit* is its first taste, but its last
Bitter as poison.

"And *tamasik* happiness is that
which springs
From sloth and sleep and foolishness.

—EDWIN ARNOLD

"This threefold classification is thus applicable to all things. The duties of the four varnas are fixed by reason of the dominance or recession of the qualities planted in each.

"A Brahmin's conduct is characterized by calmness, self-discipline, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, wisdom, experience and faith in God. The characteristics of a Kshatriya are valour, splendour, firmness, resourcefulness, not flying from battle, open-handedness and leadership. A Vaishya's task is 'to till the ground, tend cattle, venture trade', and service is the Sudra's work. This is not to say that a member of any one of these classes may not be endowed with qualities characteristic of other classes or is not entitled to cultivate them in himself. But qualities and work as mentioned above serve as signs for the recognition of a man's varna. If the qualities and tasks of each varna are recognized, there is no undesirable competition or feeling of hatred among them. There is no question here of high and low. But if each does his duty selflessly according to his nature, he will reach perfection. Therefore one's own duty, though it appears to be valueless, is better than the duty of another which seems to be easy. A man may remain free from sin when he performs the task naturally allotted to him, as he is then free from selfish desires; the very wish to do something else arises from selfishness. For the rest, all actions are clouded by defects as fire by smoke. But the natural duty is done without desire for its fruit, and thus loses its binding force.

"The calm yogi who has been sanctified by thus performing his own duty, who has his mind under control, who has given up the five sense-objects, who has overcome likes and dislikes, who lives in solitude, i.e., whose eyes are turned inward, who achieves mastery of his mind, body and speech by abstemiousness, who is ever conscious of the living presence of God, and who has given up pride, desire, anger, acquisitiveness and the like—that yogi is fit to be united with Brahman. He is equi-minded towards all men. He neither rejoices nor indulges in grief. Such a devotee has true knowledge of God and is absorbed in Him. Thus taking refuge in Me, he gains the eternal place.

"Therefore dedicate your all to Me, regard Me as the supreme object of your love, and with discrimination, fix your mind on Me. As you do this, you will overcome all difficulties. But if out of egoism you do not listen to Me, you will perish. The one thing needful is that, abandoning all conflicting views, you should come to Me alone for shelter, and thus be freed from sin.

"Do not tell this truth to anyone who is not a devotee, austere in life, and hating Me, does not wish to listen. But one who communicates this great secret to My devotees will surely come to Me in virtue of his devotion."

After having thus reported to Dhritarashtra the dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, Sanjaya said:

"Where there is Krishna, the prince of yoga, and Arjuna with his bow and arrows, there are prosperity, victory, happiness and fundamental morality."

[NOTE.] Krishna to whom the epithet 'prince of yoga' has here been applied means pure knowledge based on spiritual experience, and by referring to Arjuna as an archer it is suggested that where there is action in accordance with such knowledge, the doer obtains every wish that is not contrary to lofty morals.

From microfilms of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. & II

165. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Afternoon, February 19/21, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your post in due time. Tell Bhai Valji that I have started reading and revising his translation[1] today.

You will of course inquire from time to time after those who are imprisoned and lodged in the Sabarmati Jail, but you should also keep yourself informed in which jails the others are lodged. Lilavati came and saw me. It was good of her.

Read my letter to Champa. If she is willing to endure her lot and live with Ratilal, there will be no problem. If, however, she is not willing, I think we cannot force her to live with him. Ratilal may have to be put in the asylum again. The whole problem is a difficult one. Do what you think best. In any case, keep Doctor[2] informed.

Chimanlal must take rest. His body gives no service and no one is able to diagnose the disease.

Krishnamaiyadevi has certainly not acted properly in staying on in Calcutta. You did well in writing to her. Did you get Lakshmi[3] examined by a doctor for her swelling? Is she expecting? That can be a cause. You should ask her or find out through Lakshmibehn.

Yajna does not merely mean work for the good of others; it also means body labour. If men did not do body labour, that is, did not cultivate land and grow crops, the rains would stop. My own belief is that natural phenomena are connected with moral behaviour. I have no proof for this. It is my faith. Such faith can do no harm in any case. Little research is done about such matters in the present age, and what is written about them in ancient books is treated as superstition. It is true, of course, that they contain many superstitious ideas. Who can sift truth from error in these books? In the company of thieves even an honest man is taken for a thief. That being so, we should not interpret *yajna* strictly but accept all possible meanings which

[1] *Vide* p. 41, footnote 1.

[2] Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta, Ratilal's father

[3] Lakshmidas Asar's daughter

satisfy our moral sense and connect the phenomenon of rain with *yajna* so understood. In the *Gita* as in other scriptures, we find one and the same word used in different senses. Of course, all work done as *yajna* should be inspired with the motive of service. Send this to Bhai Jivram.

Evening, February 21, 1932

I have just finished Chapter XVIII. You will see that I have taken more freedom in this Chapter than in the others. So far I used to give a simple translation, more or less, but I did not feel satisfied with that. This time, I have given the general meaning of the Chapter, with a few comments intended to make the discussion easier to understand. I have even omitted a few verses as unnecessary for our purpose. I don't think, however, that I have omitted anything useful. God willing, I will make another effort to explain the general meaning of the work for children.

The position about visitors seems to have become uncertain again. Let us wait and see what happens.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

There are 32 letters, besides this one and the discourse on the *Gita*. A list accompanies.

Has Devdas's case been tried? Do you get any letters from him? I have received none.[1]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8210. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

166. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

February 21, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I see from Mani's letter that no one undertakes to write to me on behalf of you all. What a state of affairs is this? What purpose would my writing serve if no one assumes responsibility for attending to the letter I address to all the children and if no one so much as even acknowledges receipt of the letter? You should, therefore, write to me and tell me whether you want

[1] For the text of the *Gita* discourse (Chapter XVIII) which followed, *vide* p. 145.

such a letter from me. If you want it, say whether you will send me a reply every week. Do you remember what I told you about Miss Doris's school?[1] Though the children there are under eight years of age, what a lot of work they do on their own responsibility! Some of you are as much as sixteen years old. Though grown-up, they are counted among children. If not all, they, at any rate, should assume all the more responsibilities. At Phœnix, when Devdas and Prabhudas were twelve years old, they got other children to co-operate with them and shouldered considerable responsibility. They brought the mail from the post office and also went to post the letters. They had to walk three miles through the jungle, but courageously they went. They used to help in the printing press in a variety of ways and also fetched water from the spring.

In short, at one time Maganlal had only this batch of children to help him, and yet it was possible to cope with all the work, for the children worked as a team without sparing themselves either mentally or physically. Think, then, how much more I would expect from you. Send a reply to this and keep alive your association.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

167. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

[*February 21, 1932*][2]

SISTERS,

You have won, and I have been completely defeated. I would always like that you should win and I should be defeated. But I find it difficult to accept this defeat, for it has weakened the foundation of the Ashram. However, though I have been defeated, Truth has won. And what does it matter if, for the sake of Truth, thousands of [such] ashrams are reduced to ashes?

This is how it is your victory. Several sisters believed that the friendship of . . .[3] and . . .[4] was not innocent. Disregarding their view, I believed the contrary and defended them. The women's

[1] *Vide* pp. 35 and 63-4.

[2] The letter was presumably written on the same day as the preceding item.

[3]&[4] The names have been omitted.

judgment has proved correct and mine wrong. The matter would have ended earlier if I had accepted your view. But it was necessary that my capacity for judging people should be tested. It was for my good and yours and for the good of the Ashram that it should be tested. It was necessary that my pride should be humbled. Let us hope that it has been. Having known the generosity of your hearts, I ought to have heeded your warning, but I did not and you bore that too. You did not forsake the company of a fool like me. Personally I believe that you will lose nothing for not doing so. Behind my folly were truth and pure love and trust in people. God will therefore mend my mistake. However, I will never disregard your warning in future and will learn from this bitter experience to be careful even in the smallest matters.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

168. LETTER TO MAITHILISHARAN GUPTA

February 20/22, 1932

BHAI MAITHILISHARANJI,

I have received the gift you sent.[1] I will read it with interest. I shall enjoy reading it as the subject too is after my heart.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

February 22, 1932

[PS.]

I have finished *Panchavati*[2] and liked it. Have started on *Saket.*

From Hindi: C.W. 9454. Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan

[1] The addressee had sent *Saket,* a poetical work on the theme of Ayodhya during Rama's exile, and three other books.

[2] Another poetical work of the addressee dealing with Rama's sojourn at Panchavati.

169. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

February 22, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I was awaiting your letter. Yes, my health is good, so is Sardar's. I take honey and half a lemon in hot water at 4.30 in the morning, followed by one and a half *tola* of roasted, ground almonds and thirty dates in tomato juice at 7 o'clock. Lemon and honey in hot water is repeated at noon, and some vegetable, tomato, fifteen dates and one *tola* of almonds at 4 o'clock. I have started on vegetable only these two days, formerly I was taking thirty dates. On some days I was taking *papaya* at four, but I can take it no longer, as vegetable constitutes the fifth article of food. Neither is there any need for *papaya*. It has been like this for about fifteen days. Before that I used to take half a pound of milk in the morning and half a pound of curds in the evening, but I found milk a bit hard on digestion. Anyway, I am always pleased to give up milk on any possible pretext; so I am off milk. I do not know how long I can do without it. My weight is steady at 106 lb. Do send dates; though the ones I have are fresh and good. They have been sent by Jerajani.

You shall have to apply to Delhi or Bombay in order to visit me. The permission might be granted, if at all, on the ground of a purely friendly visit. Nothing can be done from here.

I have collected a few books on currency. But send me whatever you like. I want to study this subject as much as possible and to the best of my ability. If you send your own observations I shall go through them too.

Tell me your experiences of America. How was your health and what places did you visit? What did you observe at Battle Creek[1]? Did you meet Holmes[2]?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 7895. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] A town in Michigan, known as "The Health City"
[2] Dr. John Haynes Holmes

170. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

February 25, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I got your welcome letter this morning. I was waiting for it. We are both glad you are happy there.[1] You find yourself there just when you were about to break under the strain. I fancy that 12 oz.[2] of milk will not be enough for you. You should take 24 oz. But it may be that with the comparatively less expenditure of vitality 12 oz. may be enough for you. I simply caution you against any false economy. Your exercise does not appear to me to be enough unless you do a great deal of walking about otherwise.

I am glad you have so much company. If you are permitted to describe your company, please give me the description.

The books that I can think of recommending are Sister Nivedita's. I would like you to read Dutt's abridged metrical rendering of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, Arnold's *Indian Idylls* and *Pearls of the Faith.*

You should induce your companions to take to spinning and carding if they have time given to them for that class of labour.

[1] "As a result of my sending abroad weekly bulletins of authentic news, regarding the Civil Disobedience movement, I had been served with a notice to quit Bombay. As I had declined to comply, I was duly arrested, tried and sentenced to three months' simple imprisonment, 'A' class, and sent to Bombay female jail at Arthur Road. There being no 'A' class accommodation in the Debtor's jail, which had been temporarily turned into a jail for female political prisoners, I was put with the 'C' class prisoners for the first two nights, after which a small kitchen in the prison-yard was rigged up as my cell. But as nearly all the space was taken up by a large row of stoves, there was no room for me to sleep inside. This was a piece of good luck as it meant I had to be allowed to wander by day amongst the other prisoners in the yard and to sleep under the sky at night, while the rest were locked up in their barrack. It may be mentioned that the 'C' class political prisoners were mostly well educated women, used to a high standard of living, certainly higher than the Ashram standard. But the Bombay Government was particularly severe in its classification, Ba, Mrs. Naidu and myself being, as far as I can remember, the only women given 'A' class in the whole Province. A few were given 'B' class and all the rest 'C'. The most vital difference in this classification was the food supplied."—Mirabehn

[2] "12 oz. was the 'A' class ration." —Mirabehn

You should be able to do a great deal of Hindi there. But no overstraining on any account. You have this precious and unsought leisure. You will make such use as you think will elevate you.

My almond experiment still continues to give satisfaction and the weight still remains 106 lb. which is very good. You need have therefore no anxiety on that score.

Love from us both.

BAPU

SHRIMATI MIRABAI
C/o SUPERINTENDENT
ARTHUR ROAD PRISON
BOMBAY

From a photostat: C.W. 9505. Courtesy: Mirabehn

171. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

February 25, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I got your letter written in a beautiful hand.

Memorize carefully the chapters of the *Gita*. It would be better still if you learnt the meaning too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4077. Also C.W. 41. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

172. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

February 25, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter.

You want from me inspired utterances which would touch the heart. If I had a safe filled with them, I would open it and send some every week. But I have no such safe. The words which I pen or speak, come to me unsought. Only such words have truth in them, for they are living words. All other statements are insincere. They may seem arresting, but I think they produce no abiding effect on the heart. I can do nothing insincere,

During my student days in England, I attempted twice [to make prepared speeches] and failed on both occasions.[1] I never tried again.

And what is true about my speaking is also true about my behaviour to you on all other occasions which you mention. I remember the conversation we had regarding Mirabehn.[2] I must have replied to you as I felt at the moment. I can understand that my words did not produce a good impression on you. That is a measure of the imperfection of my non-violence. I must have said only what I felt, but you might have felt a sting in my words. "One must speak the truth in words which are agreeable" is not only a maxim of practical wisdom but is a moral principle. "Agreeable" here means non-violent. If I had told you gently what I did excitedly, my words would not have left behind them the bitter memory which they have. Truth stated in a spirit of non-violence may hurt at the moment, but its ultimate effect must be as sweet as *amrit*. This is an essential test of non-violence. I am writing this from my own bitter experience. I may have spoken to you vehemently in defence of Mirabehn, but I have not made any man or woman weep as bitterly as I have made her. My hardness of heart, impatience and ignorant attachment were responsible for such conduct. I have felt Mirabehn's self-sacrifice to be beyond praise and, therefore, wish to see her perfect. The moment I see any imperfection in her, my ignorant attachment makes me impatient and I rebuke her sharply. The result is a flood of tears. These instances have opened my eyes to the presence of violence in me and, recalling them, I have been trying to reform myself. I, therefore, welcome your letters. I do not know whether in return I shall be able to give you anything, but personally I benefit from them. I realized this thing—my hard-heartedness—more vividly in England. Mira was the chief person in attendance on me. There, too, I caused her to weep bitterly on the slightest provocation. But I learnt a lesson from that experience. God has never let any delusion of mine last for ever. Even in the political sphere, whenever I have taken a false step God has immediately opened my eyes. Your letters help that process of awakening.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 37 and 55-6.

[2] The addressee had been rebuked by Gandhiji when she complained against Mirabehn's having blocked a passage; later she quoted this incident as proof of Gandhiji's unwillingness to listen to complaints against those whom he trusted.

You will now understand my previous letter[1] better. How can we expect perfection from an imperfect being? A blind man has collected a band of other blind folk. But the blind man knows that he is blind, and also knows the cure for his blindness. Hence, though living with blind people, he is confident that he will not lead them into a pit, nor will he himself fall into it. He walks with a stick in is hand. He feels the path ahead with the stick before taking every step. And, therefore, things have gone well on the whole so far. If, despite his using the stick, the blind man has occasionally strayed from the path, he has immediately realized his error and retraced his steps and led back his co-workers. So long as my blindness remains, even a person like you who loves me will continue to have reasons to criticize me. When the blindness has disappeared, there will be no such grounds for criticism. Meanwhile, let all of us, blind men and women, who are seekers after truth, describe the elephant as we perceive it. Our descriptions will vary, but each will be perfectly true from the person's limited point of view. After all, everyone of us will have but touched the elephant. When our eyes open all of us will dance with joy and shout: 'How blind we were! This is an elephant, about which we had read in the *Gita*. How fortunate it would have been if our eyes had opened earlier'. But why should we worry if their opening is delayed? Time has no meaning for God, or rather He measures it differently. Ignorance, thus, will become transformed into knowledge.

I hope you will get from this an explanation of all the shortcomings you may have observed in me. That does not mean, of course, that you should not put your doubts before me. You may continue to put them and I will reply every time.

Send my blessings to Sushila and Kisan. And also to Dhurandhar if you are permitted to write to him. How is Jamnadas's health? What happened to his school?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10274. Also C.W. 6722. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] *Vide* pp. 104-6.

173. LETTER TO RANCHHODJI DAYALJI

February 25, 1932

BHAI RANCHHODBHAI,

I was glad to read your letter. I consider your family to be fortunate. Money is a fleeting thing which comes and goes. Is Kunvarji's health all right? Kalyanji, of course, has no complaint regarding health. Do all the three brothers live together?

Convey to Gangabehn compliments from us both for keeping up her courage. How is Napoleon[1]? Ask him to write to me.

Both of us are quite well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2695

174. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

February 25, 1932

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

I got your letter.

Every human being is liable to err. However, nothing but good results to him who, on realizing his mistake, tries to mend it, since in the long run such a person learns not to make mistakes. His conduct is inspired by love of truth. Where there is such love, the erring man will not deceive himself or the world.

I would regard it as his error if Tolstoy expressed the opinion that you mention. He expressed such mistaken opinions on several occasions. His greatness lay in the fact that as soon as he realized his mistake, he confessed it and corrected it. Moreover, there were so many changes in his way of life that one should also take into account the time when he expressed a particular opinion. In any case, in the matter of husband-wife relationship, I myself am definitely of the opinion that the consent of both should be necessary for their union and not for living apart. If that were not so, both would ordinarily remain

[1] Chhotubhai, Kunvarji Mehta's son

in a fallen state. It happens only in rare cases that both wake up at the same time and remain awake together.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9509. Also C.W. 425. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

175. LETTER TO SHAKARIBEHN C. SHAH

February 25, 1932

CHI. SHAKARIBEHN,

So I have a letter from you at last. If you tell them that your letter is meant for me alone, nobody will read it there. What does it matter if the jail authorities here read it? I would, therefore, advise you to write to me without any reserve.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 30

176. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

February 25, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

Does not a man grow? And anything that grows must have a root. Otherwise, how can it grow? Will it be all right, if we say that a man's root is his stomach? By what means does a tree get its food? Is it not through the root? We get our food through the stomach. The food is turned into its essence there, and it is then digested and nourishes the body. We may, therefore, say that a man's root is his stomach. Is this all right?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5766. Also C.W. 2989. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

177. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

February 25, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

I got your letter. Your handwriting is good. Your daily programme of work also seems all right. Go on in the same manner and keep on growing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9422 Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

178. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

February 25, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Received your letter. The inmates of the Ashram can never abuse one another. But quite often, what is not meant to be abuse sounds like abuse. Hence, let me know what you consider to be abuse and also inform me who uses those words. Anyone who stays in the Ashram must abandon fear. Whom need we fear? We should boldly tell even the elders what we regard as the proper thing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9946. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

179. A LETTER

February 26, 1932

CHI.,

I have your letter. The chief reason for my giving up milk was health, and, therefore, I will go without it only so long as I can preserve my health. So far, at any rate, my weight and strength have remained unaffected.

A crisis was bound to arise for khadi too. What would it avail even if it survives this time? Every calamity, if we properly understand it, is a test. And a test means suffering, that is, penance. Now penance always purifies the person who undergoes it and also purifies the cause for which it is undertaken. There is no exception at any time to this law. Nothing, therefore, disturbs my joy and peace.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 8950. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

180. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

February 26, 1932

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. I did reply to you. . . .[1] It is certainly possible to acquire control over the sense organs. The Shastras proclaim in the clearest words that such control is difficult, but they were composed to help people to acquire it. It becomes possible through hard practice and the cultivation of disinterestedness. Spiritual development and self-realization go hand in hand. The remedy for your mental agitation lies in you, and rest also depends on you. I see many in jails who do no work, but all of them appear agitated. Rest for the body is not true rest. The sun that takes no rest even for a moment is always fresh. The Lord says that, though He works ceaselessly without rest and without one moment of relaxation, He is the abode of peace. You

[1] Omission as in the source

should, therefore, seek everything within yourself. At this time when the inmates of the Ashram are doing real work and not merely play-acting, you find it uninteresting. Though there are numerous weaknesses in the Ashram, I describe its work as real because it is not a shop doing business but a means of serving the world and a sincere attempt in that direction to the best of our ability. For anybody who understands the things aright, the Ashram activities are in truth rest from work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 345. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

181. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

February 26, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter after I had waited for one for a long time. Tell Chhotubhai[1] that both of us often think about him. Do you get any news about Pyarelal? How is Chandubhai's health? Where is Dr. Sumant? How does he keep? I am more or less all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1828

182. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN N. KHARE

February 26, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMIBEHN,

I did get a letter from you at last. Why should you feel shy in writing to me? I hope to get your reply to my last letter.[2] I am sure you will not disappoint me.

I am very glad that you are learning weaving. Can we say that Rambhau's stay in Almora has fulfilled our expectations?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 280. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] Chhotubhai Purani, a pioneer of physical culture in Gujarat
[2] *Vide* p. 104.

183. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

February 26, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

Since your beak has grown so long, how can I recognize you though you remain my stick? My compliments for such fine Hindi. Should they go to you or to Parasramji? Discuss the question with him and let me know.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3981. Also C.W. 27. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

184. LETTER TO MAHAVIR GIRI

February 27, 1932

CHI. MAHAVIR,

I got your letter. I was glad to know that you kept good health there. Since you left the Ashram to go to Darjeeling, it would have been better if you had proceeded directly there. The place is certainly cold, but this is considered the best season. Even persons who are ill go there in this season. Do you meet the Gujaratis who live in that place?

Be very careful in spending money and keep accounts. Write to me regularly. See that you and your sisters do not forget your studies.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6234

185. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

February 28, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

I was delighted to have your letter again and the unexpected scribble from Nani[1].

I see you have a cosmopolitan company[2]. I only hope this does not give you more than your health can manage.

No, the *Gita* does not teach differently. What it does teach is that all our acts must be natural and spontaneous even when unconscious. When they are so, there is no thought of reward or result. There is, therefore, in pure love no giving and no taking. Put in another way there is no giving on earth without taking. Love gives because it must; it is its nature. It therefore does not calculate whether there is a corresponding gain. It is unconscious of the giving and more so of the taking. Love is its own reward. When there is that ineffable love, there is a joy which is above all the so-called joys we think we experience from outward circumstances. It is that joy I want you to possess. There was a time when you thought, I thought, you had it. But you had not then gone through the fire. The joy that will surely be yours one day will come out of the purifying richness of that fire. It will steal over you when it does come. May it come soon.

We are both well.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

Photostat No. 108. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, pp. 88-9

[1] Addressee's daughter

[2] "The Menon home at Selly Oak was always an international centre." (*My Dear Child*, p. 88)

186. LETTER TO NANI MENON

February 28, 1932

MY DEAR NAN,

Your attempt to write a letter to me was very good. And what a reindeer you have sent. What lovely horns! I am sorry I am not playing with the goats, though they are brought before me everyday twice to be milked. I don't play because when they come, I am always doing something which I must not give up. Yes, there are a few flowers but nothing much to speak of. The ground is stony and they can't afford in prisons to lay out flower-beds. You must write again.

Kisses to both of you.

BAPU

My Dear Child, p. 117

187. LETTER TO ABBAS

February 28, 1932

CHI. ABBAS,

In spite of his struggles a man is carried away by passion, since to destroy it completely requires an immense effort. Some things require comparatively less effort and some others require a much greater effort. We require less effort to spin yarn of 10 or 20 counts, but none has progressed so far as to spin yarn of 200 counts. To do that requires better equipment and a far greater effort. We do know that they spun yarn of 200 counts in Bengal a hundred years ago. If different degrees of effort are required in such a small matter as spinning, it is bound to be so in acquiring freedom from passion. Knowing this, the more we meet with failure the greater should our efforts be. Some mountaineers have been attempting to reach the top of the Himalayas. But none has succeeded so far. Our attempt is for a still higher cause, and it knows no failure.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6315. Also C.W. 8951. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

188. *LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS*

February 28, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I am waiting for your reply to my letter[1]. Meanwhile, I congratulate those of you who have undertaken to help in the kitchen. Some of you are old enough to be able, if they wish, to assume the whole responsibility for it. The fact that we experience difficulties particularly in the kitchen is due entirely to our shortcomings. I list below for your information as many rules as I can think of. If you follow them, you will not find the least difficulty in running the kitchen.

1. Never lose your temper whatever happens, whether something is spoilt or broken. Never be impatient. Never worry about anything. Find out the cause of the trouble and remove it.

2. If a co-worker does not finish his work or is lazy about it do not get irritated with him, but take upon yourself the additional burden.

3. Do thoroughly and as perfectly as you can whatever you do.

4. Never play with one another while in the kitchen. Do not hit anybody even in jest.

5. The best thing is not to speak a word unless necessary. If anybody cannot control himself, he may talk in low whispers and make harmless and innocent jokes. However, everybody should gradually form the habit of speaking nothing at all.

6. If you do talk, do not indulge in malicious criticism of one another or back-biting.

7. It is enough for small boys to wear only tucked-up dhotis in the kitchen. The girls also, when sitting, should tuck-up their skirts behind and wear only jackets above them. It is not necessary for them to wear the half sari in the kitchen. This saves cloth and minimizes the danger of clothes catching fire. If anybody wears a shirt, the sleeves should be tucked up at the elbow.

8. When anybody feels the urge to sneeze, he should hold the kerchief over his mouth before sneezing, so that he does not blow spittle from the mouth. Use the kerchief for blowing the nose and, if you perspire, wipe the drops with it. One ought not

[1] *Vide* pp. 151-2.

to let the drops fall into anything. This means that everyone must carry a handkerchief.

9. For wiping the utensils, etc., there should be a separate towel in the kitchen and it should be washed everyday with soap.

10. Everyone working in the kitchen should take special care to keep his nails clean. They should be trimmed regularly. If there is still any dirt under them, it should be removed with pointed straw.

11. No one should touch or taste any cooked item for sampling it.

12. If, to ascertain whether a vegetable or some similar dish has been properly salted, it has to be tasted, the leader of the boys may take some in a spoon and taste it and, after doing so, immediately wash the spoon clean.

13. If some special dish or dishes have to be cooked for a sick person or a person who is observing a vow, do not regard this as a burden but cook the thing cheerfully. Experience will show that, if the time-table for the various jobs has been strictly followed, no burden will be felt at all.

14. Make it a point to arrive at the kitchen punctually at the time appointed for you. Know that every minute matters, so that you should arrive two minutes earlier but never a minute later.

15. If you have no work in the kitchen, do not remain there to gossip or just to look at the others working.

16. The kitchen should be kept clean all the time. All the things should be in their proper places. After one's job is done, one should not leave without arranging the things in order.

In addition to these, you may introduce other rules that you may think of. If you think that any of those given by me should be dropped, you may drop them with the consent of the elders. But scrupulously follow whatever rules you lay down. Everyone should make a copy of the rules and keep it with him.

I have often felt that the kitchen provides a means for us to test how far we practise the teaching of the *Gita*.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am not writing a separate letter to the women today, since this one is already longer than I had intended it to be, and, moreover, such a letter should do quite well for them also.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8955. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

189. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

February 28, 1932

CHI. MANU,

You certainly wrote a good letter. But there is much room for improving your handwriting. If Nanu[1] has become Vimalshah, from where shall we bring an elephant for him? Or will he make a stick an elephant and ride on it? Or will he first do deeds like Vimalshah's and make himself fit to bestride an elephant?

You wrote a description of Mount Abu. Now write one of Almora.

Ask Dudhibehn to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7420. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

190. DEATH, A FRIEND[2]

February 29, 1932

There was once a wise man, named Socrates, who lived in Athens. His unconventional ideas, which, however, spread love of truth and goodness, displeased the authorities, and he was sentenced to death. In that country people were in those days sometimes sentenced to die by drinking poison. Like Mirabai, Socrates was asked to drink a cup of poison. Our purpose here is to discuss the substance of the concluding words of Socrates's defence at the time of his trial. We can all derive a moral from it. Let us call Socrates by the name Sukrit. The Arabs knew him as Sokrat.

This is what Sukrit said: 'It is my unshakable faith that no harm comes to a good man either in this world or the next. God never forsakes good men and their friends. I also believe

[1] Addressee's younger brother Vimalchandra. Nanu is a pet name for "junior".

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi"; *vide* the following item.

which had decayed and he was cured by sun-baths. Countless people have benefited by this treatment.

I had a fairly long talk with Mathew. You will be happy to know that he spins and does a bit of other work.

Afternoon, February 29, 1932

I have not yet been able to start 'Bal Gita'[1]. Nor can I decide what else I can write and send. This week, therefore, I send no special material.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

In the evening, ultimately, I could not resist the impulse to write something. About visitors there is no decision yet.[2]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8211. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

192. *LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MEHTA*

February 29, 1932

BHAISHRI BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. Why should we feel hurt if a relation or friend gives us nothing or takes away something that is ours? If we realize that we have no claim on them, it is my experience that everything would be all right. I have observed that that is the experience of many others too. You have earned much and gone through many sweet and bitter experiences. Why should you not rest satisfied with what you have got and devote your abilities and your wealth entirely to public service?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

SJT. BHAGWANJI ANUPCHAND VAKIL
SADAR
RAJKOT
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5814. Also C.W. 3037. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Literally, 'Children's *Gita*', which later came to be known as *Ramdas Gita*

[2] For the article "Death, a Friend" which followed, *vide* the preceding item.

193. LETTER TO KRISHNA M. KAPADIA

February 29, 1932

CHI. KRISHNA,

I was glad to get your letter.

Nobody has been able to come and see me recently, and that is why there has been nothing in the papers. My health is excellent. Sardar is with me. If you can come and are permitted to see us, do come, both of you. Ba must have been released now.

If you have still not overcome love of money, do so. Wealth does not accompany anyone after death, but one's good and evil deeds do. One should, therefore, do whatever service one can.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./XXII

194. LETTER TO R. V. MARTIN

March 1, 1932

DEAR MAJOR MARTIN,

As you know, for two weeks now I have not had any visits. They have been stopped because, I understand, the Government are revising the instructions that have been in force in this connection. The suspense is tantalizing for me and inconvenient for those who wish to visit me. I would therefore like an early decision in the matter.

The question of seeing my companions who have been brought to this prison and on which I wrote[1] to you a fortnight ago is much more vital for me. As I have said, this meeting of some of my companions now and then is a human want I may not deny myself without shaking and impairing the whole nervous system. I had hoped that you would procure an early decision, as I have simply asked for a repetition of what was considered reasonable by the Government last year.[2] I press for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] *Vide* p. 98.

[2] The reference is to the facilities given during his last term of detention in Yeravda Prison in 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV.

195. LETTER TO PREMLILA THACKERSEY

March 1, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I have been robbing you of lots of honey these days. Both of us have to take it frequently with warm water, and so two bottles get exhausted in nine or ten days. If you experience difficulty in getting honey, please let me know. Sometimes the honey is mixed with dirt and sometimes there are pieces of cork in it. That made me doubt whether the honey was collected from hives in the countryside. If that is so, I would not regard it fit for our consumption, for in collecting such honey a great many bees are killed and, moreover, it is never clean. I, therefore, eat only the honey which is collected scientifically. Such honey is now collected in our country. Please inquire how the honey which you send is collected and let me know.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

Since the right hand is tired, I have written the above with the left.

I wrote the following[1] through mistake on the back of the reply postcard on the date mentioned. I had preserved it and use it now.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4821-a. Courtesy: Premlila Thackersey

[1] The reference is to the following sentences in the letter dated February 2, 1932: "I ate for many days the honey which you had given me for the voyage. It was excellent." *Vide* p. 59.

196. LETTER TO BENARSILAL BAZAJ

March 1, 1932

CHI. BENARSI,

Why have you not written to me till now? What are your present activities? What is the state of your mind? I met Father several times and came into close contact with him. He looked after me with great love. He used to come and see me practically every day. And he had literally encamped with Mahadev, Devdas and the others. I tried hard to persuade him to return to India, but did not succeed. Certainly he has in him a high degree of the spirit of self-sacrifice.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9438. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

197. LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ

March 1, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI,

I got your letter. It is my habit to give to children names which suggest the qualities we wish them to have. Following that practice, I suggest Gopal (lal or das) or Madhav (lal or das). Both are names of the Lord whose pet (lal) or servant (das) I would like myself or anybody else to be. Further, the word Gopal has two beautiful meanings: *Go* means a cow or a sense organ, so that the name would also signify one who keeps cows or one who controls the senses. Madhav, too, means nearly the same thing. Madhav is the destroyer of the demon Madhu, who dwells in our bodies. If you have any difficulty in choosing between these two names you may cast lots and decide. If the choice were left to me, I would prefer Gopal. If, however, the name Ramesh is thought better, there is no harm in giving that name either. Santok should write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9060

198. *LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH*

March 3, 1932

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I got your letter. I was happy to learn that you were improving.

Write to Father Elwin and ask him to write to me without fail. Shamrao also should write.

Please try and mitigate Champa's suffering as much as you can.

Decide everything on the basis that a wife has the same rights as her husband.

Champa may do only as much as she voluntarily agrees to do.

I have already given detailed comments on the description of the spinning-wheel sent by Abbas. If you have not seen them, please let me know. I will send the comments again.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 36

199. *LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI*

March 3, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your postcard and letter. You say that you have nothing to write about, in the same way as children do. This is not right. You will be able to fill pages even if you describe your experiences. Think, and write.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1829

200. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

March 3, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

I may say that you wrote a good letter this time.

One should not tell a lie even in jest and, if one has done so, one must immediately correct one's lapse.

Should one learn even what kind of questions to ask? We may ask questions the answers to which we do not know and which we know the other person can reply.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I was very glad that you stood first at the examination. My congratulations.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4078. Also C.W. 42. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

201. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

March 4, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I have your letter. Those girls writing in Hindi write very nice letters. Why should God bend to every prayer? We hardly know when he is pleased or offended. Prayer is its own reward.

As a matter of fact, Truth is the best policy[1]. It is tact[2] as well as delicacy[3]. Tact[4] can be called gentleness. Than truth there is no better policy on earth, nothing more tactful or delicate.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 4968. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra. Also G.N. 7491

[1],[2],[3]&[4] In the source these English words are in

202. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

March 5, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Since you have demanded a long letter, I have taken the double sheet. Now that you have entered upon your sixteenth year, you have become a responsible person. Improve your health and dedicate yourself to the service of others for life. And for this you should, of your own free will, observe the rules of Ashram life.

Now to your questions.

In the Ashram we keep no idol or image because there is before us God's image in the form of the world and we should know God through it. If we look at the sky, there are innumerable images there too, and if we wish we may meditate on any of them and think that God dwells there also. In this connection, we should remember that persons like Imam Saheb and Amina did not find it necessary to have what people call an idol.

I have rivers and valleys to be crossed, which means that I have a long distance to go before I can realize God.

There can be no absolution from the sin of telling a lie knowingly, no matter how severe the *prayashchitta* one undergoes for it. *Prayashchitta* wins forgiveness only for one who has told a lie in ignorance. Do you understand this? If not, ask me again.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9948. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

203. LETTER TO ISHVARBHAI PATEL

March 5, 1932

CHI. ISHVAR,

I got your letter. Both of us were pleased. Persuade Napoleon also to write sometimes. And you should continue to write. I hope all of you are well.

Blessings from us both.

BAPU

CHI. ISHVARBHAI PATEL
C/O GANGABEHN KUNVARJI
VANZ
Via SACHIN

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2696

204. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

March 5, 1932

CHI. KUSUM,

What a woman you are! You wrote to me a postcard and a letter, and yet could tell me nothing. What did you read all these months, what thoughts came to you, how much did you spin, what health did you maintain, what places did you visit? If you wish, you can tell me all this and much else.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1830

205. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

March 5, 1932

BHAI NANABHAI,

I got your letter. I had read in the papers about Tara's[1] leaving. I know that Vijayalakshmi will miss her very much. But it is things like these which test us.

I also had a letter from Manilal and Sushila. I had advised him not to return without making proper arrangements for the affairs in South Africa. Probably he will be in India next week. You gave me no news about your health. Please do in your next letter.

Bl

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7519. Al
Kanubhai Mashruwala

[1] Tara Mashruwala; Sushila Ga

206. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 5, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I had sent a wire to Rajkot the day before yesterday to cheer Khushalbhai. I have known few persons as fortunate as he. We would be happy to see him live long and be our guide and counsellor. But, should he die now, even from the ordinary human point of view that should be no cause for grief. Since, however, there is no further news from you, I assume that the cloud has vanished.

The issue of visitors has been partly settled. Anyone from the Ashram can come and see me, though even from among the Ashram inmates those who are classed as 'political' cannot come. But there are none such at present, unless we count Valji among them. If, therefore, anybody wishes to come next week, he may. The Superintendent should be informed in advance. It would be advisable to inform me too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8212. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

207. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

March 5, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

Your letter in Hindi was so good that when I read it, I thought you to be some other Pushpa.[1] Your handwriting in the last letter was not good. You would get three marks for it. One should write each letter in a word as carefully as one draws a picture. See Mangala's handwriting. How beautiful it is! However, your handwriting this time was certainly better than in your previous letters.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3982. Also C.W. 28. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Pushpa S. Patel", p. 86.

208. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

March 5, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

You should improve your handwriting. You do write carefully, but the handwriting is not as good as it should be.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Is there any news about Narahari?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5767. Also C.W. 2990. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

209. PREFACE TO "FROM YERAVDA MANDIR"

March 6, 1932

During my incarceration in 1930 in the Yeravda Central Prison, I wrote weekly letters to the Satyagraha Ashram, containing a cursory examination of the principal Ashram observances.[1] As the Ashram influence had already travelled beyond its geographical limits, copies of the letters were multiplied for distribution. They were written in Gujarati. There was a demand for translation into Hindi and other Indian languages, and also into English. Shri Valji Desai gave a fairly full translation in English. But seeing me in possession of comparative leisure during the recurrent incarceration, he has sent me his translation for revision. I have gone through it carefully, and touched up several passages to bring out my meaning more to my liking. I need hardly add that, if I was writing anew for the English reader, perhaps I should write a wholly new thing. But that would be going beyond my commission. And perhaps it is as well that even the English reader has the trend of my thought as expressed to the inmates of the Ashram, and in the year 1930. I have therefore taken the least liberty with the original argument.

M. K. GANDHI

From Yeravda Mandir

[1] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 41.

210. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

March 6, 1932

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

You have kindly given me a copy of the fresh instructions issued by the Government about the weekly visits.

I appreciate the trust reposed in me regarding the determination as to who shall be considered political inmates of the Ashram. I am anxious to be true to the trust. But before I could do so, there should be a common definition of the adjective 'political' between the Government and me. I take 'political' to mean those who are politically minded and are actually taking part in politics as *apart from civil resistance.* For if by 'political' are meant those who have been heretofore imprisoned as civil resisters or are believers in the doctrine of civil resistance, then there is no non-political inmate in the Ashram. If, however, the meaning is [as] I have given it, there are only three political inmates. I mean Sjts. Mahadev Desai, Pyarelal and Devdas Gandhi. But if I may not see the first two, I may not see Devdas Gandhi for they are like Devdas to me. As it so happens, they are all incarcerated. I may also mention that at the present moment there are only boys and girls and the few adults who are reserved for looking after the youngsters and the multifarious industrial activities of the Ashram.

It is difficult, too, for me to submit a list of non-Ashram friends till I know the definition that the Government have in mind of the term 'political'. I shall await reply to this before I submit a fairly full list for approval. But, meanwhile, I give below illustrative names of those friends whom I regard as non-political and whom I would put in the same category as my relatives.

Lady Thackersey, residence—Yeravda Hill. She is a social worker. She helped me during my serious illness in 1923 when I was a patient in the Sasoon Hospital.

Prof. Trivedi of the Agriculture College, Poona. He stands to me in the same close contact as Lady Thackersey.

Yeshvantprasad Desai, mill-owner residing in Matunga. He nursed me during the same illness and took up his abode in Poona for helping me.

Pyare Ali and his wife, living in retirement at a retreat near Thana, where they have taken in a few Muslim orphans. They lived nearly a year at the Ashram. They are a deeply religious couple.

These friends are in no sense political.

Pending reply to this letter, I have written to the Manager of the Ashram[1] to send those inmates who may wish to visit me.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9554. Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 (40), Pt. I, pp. 131-3

211. IMAM SAHEB–I[2]

March 7, 1932

I am not yet ready to write and send chapters of the 'Bal Gita'. As I was wondering what I should send this time, it occurred to me that I should give to the inmates of the Ashram my reminiscences of the Imam Saheb and should carry out this good resolution without delay. I, therefore, wish to write out such reminiscences as occur to me and as I think I may narrate.

Imam Saheb went to South Africa about the same year as I (1893). His real name was Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, but, as he served as Imam in South Africa, most people knew him as Imam Saheb. I always addressed him by this name.

The Imam Saheb's father was the Muezzin of the famous Jumma Masjid in Bombay and served in that capacity right till his death. He died only a few years ago, after the Imam Saheb's return to India. He fell dead just as he was washing and getting ready for the *azan*[3]. Such a death comes only to the blessed. The Imam Saheb's forefathers were Arabs and had come to India and settled in the Konkan years ago. Hence he knew the Konkani language too. His mother tongue was Gujarati, but he had little schooling. He knew Arabic well enough to be able to read from the Koran Sharif with a pleasing intonation, though not so well as to be able to understand everything in the Koran. He had

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", p. 180.

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi"; *vide* the following item.

[3] Call to the faithful

picked up, through contacts in practical life, English, Dutch and Creole French. Urdu, of course, he knew. He had also a working knowledge of Zulu. His intellect was so sharp that, if he had regularly studied in a school, he would have earned reputation as a great scholar. Though he was not a lawyer, he had come to understand subtleties of law through practical experience.

The Imam Saheb had gone to South Africa for trade and had earned much. When he gave up business, he kept coaches which he supplied on hire and had a fairly good income from that calling. Being a man of independent temper, he never tried his fortune in big business. He had a sweet voice, and, since his father was a Muezzin, he occasionally officiated as Imam in the mosque in Johannesburg. But he accepted no honorarium for his services.

The Imam Saheb had married twice. Both the wives were Malays. His first marriage was not successful, and so he married the lady whom we knew as his wife. This marriage had given him much happiness. He and the Haji Saheba served each other with great devotion. He was a sincere friend. So far as I know, the Imam Saheb's views about marriage had undergone a complete change and he had come to believe in monogamy.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

212. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

March 7, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I infer from your second postcard that you must have returned to the Ashram. I hope you got my postcard[1] despatched from here yesterday. Through some visitor, send again a piece of leather for the soles. I observe that there is one sole every month to be repaired. There is no urgency about the leather. Both the sandals have been re-soled only recently, so that they will require no attention for two months at least. It was only in order that it may be handy in case of necessity that I have asked you so early to send one.

All inmates of the Ashram who may be described as 'non-political' will be permitted now to visit me. It is left to me to decide which of the inmates should be treated as 'political'. But

[1] *Vide* p. 180.

whom the Government would class as 'political', I can know only when I receive its definition of the term. I have, therefore, asked for such a definition.[1] Meanwhile, anyone who wishes to come from there and whom you permit may come and see me, since, according to me, there is no one in the Ashram at present who may be described as 'political'. If nobody is particularly eager to come, it is not necessary for any of you to come merely to make us feel happy. If, however, anybody wishes to come, I would not say 'No' to him or her. The Government has asked for a list of 'non-politicals' not living in the Ashram. I will draw up such a list after I receive its definition of the term 'political'.

Do you get any news about Prabhavati?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Valji that I have revised his translation of my letters on the Ashram vows and written out the preface[2]. I will keep them with me now.

Manilal will probably arrive there during this week. If possible, the two[3] should come and see me.

There are 37 letters, in addition to this one and the reminiscences[4] of Imam Saheb.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8213. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* "Letter to M. G. Bhandari", pp. 182-3.
[2] *Vide* p. 181.
[3] Presumably Manilal Gandhi and his wife, Sushila
[4] *Vide* the preceding item.

213. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*[1]

[*March 7, 1932*][2]

DEAR KAKA,

How are you? What food you get? How many are with you and who are they? How is Prabhudas? What food he gets? Inform me about your weight and that of Prabhudas. Similar questions I have asked Mr. Quinn fearing you might not get this letter. What are you reading? We both are all right here. For the present I take dry dates, lime-juice, green vegetables and almond-bread. I am not constipated. If my weight goes down, I will take milk again. I intend writing 'Bal Gita' and have commenced writing Imam Saheb's *Sirat.* I am studying the position of the stars and for that I take assistance of that Gujarati book which is translated from Marathi and also see the maps given in the *Weekly Times.* I get up at night and see the positions of the stars. This time I hardly send for books. But I get some books from America. I think I will not be able to study Marathi this time. I feel weak and require more sleep. Perhaps after long rest I might regain my strength. How is Narahari? My blessings to you all.

Yours,

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Pt. I, p. 88

[1] The source bears a note to the effect that the Gujarati original of this is not available; this translation appears to have been done by the jail authorities. The addressee was in Visapur Jail.

[2] The date is inferred from the reference in the letter to Gandhiji having commenced writing the biographical skech of Imam Saheb; *vide* the preceding item, also "Diary, 1932".

214. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

March 7, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I think Rama humbled your pride by making you forget to complete your sacrificial spinning.[1] I don't count your lapse to be as serious as you do. It is right, however, that you should regard it as big enough. I say that Rama humbled your pride because if we, who are but puppets constantly liable to err, did not commit a single mistake in doing something, we are likely to be filled with pride (however subtle it may be). Rama seems to have treated you in the same way as He—or was it Siva?—had treated Narad. The incident has had two good results—your pride has been humbled and you will not make the same mistake again.

I have no comment to make here on the vivid sketches in your letter. I have never believed that you are hard-hearted. Your criticisms help me. Every one of us has virtues and weaknesses. If you are less inclined to see the virtues of others, try to see them more often.

There was nothing in my letter to make Narandas ask questions about himself. He does work in the spirit of *yajna*. It is not his fault that I have left him no time to do any body labour. This, too, is evidence of my lack of organizing ability. If I had been able to make efficient arrangements from the time that the Ashram was started, it would not have been necessary for several persons, as it is now, to be busy only in general supervision. We have gone on the way we started. I believe that it is still possible to change things, but I do not know how, and the Ashram has still not got a man or a woman, who will give more thought to the problem and enforce the Ashram rules more strictly. Till we get such a person, we should tolerate the present conditions. Let us always remember that the Ashram very much falls short of its ideal, for I believe it quite possible to organize things so well that everyone in it will do his or her share of body labour and

[1] The addressee was rather proud of her unfailing observance of the Ashram rules. But once her spinning was short by eight to ten rounds and she atoned for it by a three-day fast.

good order will be preserved. Let us work in this faith. We shall discover the key one day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10275. Also C.W. 6723. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

215. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 7, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

What a lot of trouble you have taken! There is no reason for getting disturbed over the change in my diet. I have little or no faith in calories. Their[1] norm applies only to them. How can we vie with them? Individual professions too must be considered while laying down a standard of calorie requirements. Now I am taking four ounces of toast too. I have received the dates. I think the good quality dates from Arabia are better than these. The ones sent to me are quite good. I will take milk as soon as I feel the need. Have no worry.

I am not surprised to read your account of America. But there are many good people too.

Did the climate over there agree with you? I am glad to learn that you have discovered the right diet for yourself. How is Malaviyaji Maharaj? Sardar tells me that Rameshwardas[2] was ill. I had no knowledge of this. How is he now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 7896. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Presumably, Americans'
[2] Addressee's brother

216. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

March 8, 1932

DEAR AGATHA,

I have your two letters also the postman's attempt [*sic*].

You are quite correct in not giving me details of the activities of friends, nor am I eager to know them. I am quite sure that all of you over there are doing your best and what is proper.[1]

Do you hear from or see Maud? Please tell her to write to me and tell me all about her health and her progress otherwise.

My regards to all the friends.

I have not yet received the Ruskin volumes.[2]

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1451

217. LETTER TO MANMOHANDAS P. GANDHI

March 8, 1932

BHAI MANMOHAN[3],

I have your letter. I had been thinking about you a few days ago when I got it. The books have not yet reached me.

I cannot call to mind any particular book on wool and silk industries. You should look up the long bibliography at the end of Puntambekar's essay[4]. There is one in Gregg's book also.

For the present at least, I have quite a stock of books. Moreover, Ghanshyamdas also is going to send some, and so I do not wish to put you to trouble on that account just now.

[1] The reference, presumably, is to the India Conciliation Group, London, whose "members, varying in views, were united in a concern for the situation in India". The addressee became its Honorary Secretary in December, 1931.

[2] *Fors Clavigera*; *vide* "Diary, 1932", entries under March 25 and April 6; also in *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, under March 28, 1932, Mahadev Desai explains: "Bapu is reading Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera* with great interest . . . ."

[3] M. P. Gandhi, Secretary, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta

[4] *Hand-spinning and Hand-weaving—An Essay* by S. V. Puntambekar and N. S. Varadachari (S. Ganesan, Madras)

There is some harm even in being my namesake. If nothing else, you have to reply to correspondents and also confess that you are no Mahatma![1] Both of us are quite well. I cannot do much work with my right hand now and hence I have written this with the left.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIYUT MANMOHANDAS GANDHI
135 CANNING STREET
CALCUTTA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 15

218. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

March 11, 1932[2]

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

You will perhaps recollect that at the end of my speech[3] at the Round Table Conference when the minorities' claim was presented, I had said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorate to the Depressed Classes. This was not said in the heat of the moment, nor by way of rhetoric. It was meant to be a serious statement.

In pursuance of that statement, I had hoped on my return to India to mobilize public opinion against separate electorate, at any rate, for the Depressed Classes. But it was not to be.

From the newspapers which I am permitted to read, I observe that any moment His Majesty's Government may declare their decision. At first I had thought that if the decision was found to create separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, I should take such steps as I might then consider necessary to give effect to my vow. But I feel that it would be unfair to the British Government for me to act without giving previous notice. Naturally they could not attach the significance I give to my statement.

I need hardly reiterate all the objections I have to the creation of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. I feel as if

[1] Gandhiji's letters from correspondents abroad were misdirected to the addressee.

[2] Despatched on this date, the letter was drafted on March 9 and revised on March 10; *vide* "Diary, 1932".

[3] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, pp. 293-8.

I was one of them. Their case stands on a wholly different footing from that of the others. I am not against their representation in the legislatures. I should favour every one of their adults, male or female, being registered as voters, irrespective of education or property qualifications, even though the franchise test may be stricter for the others. But I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them and for Hinduism, whatever it may be from a purely political standpoint. To appreciate the harm that separate electorates would do to them, one has to know how they are distributed amongst the so-called caste Hindus, and how dependent they are on the latter. So far as Hinduism is concerned separate electorate would simply vivisect and disrupt it. For me the question of these classes is predominantly moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared to the moral and religious issue. You will have to appreciate my feelings in this matter by remembering that I have been interested in the condition of these classes from my boyhood and have more than once staked my all for their sake. I say this not to pride myself in any way. For, I feel that no penance that caste Hindus may do can, in any way, compensate for the calculated degradation to which they have consigned the Depressed Classes for centuries. But I know that separate electorate is neither penance nor any remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under.

I therefore respectfully inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, I must fast unto death.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that such a step whilst I am a prisoner must cause grave embarrassment to His Majesty's Government and that it will be regarded by many as highly improper on the part of one holding my position to introduce into the political field methods which they would describe as hysterical, if not much worse. All I can urge in defence is that for me the contemplated step is not a method, it is part of my being. It is a call of conscience which I dare not disobey, even though it may cost whatever reputation for sanity I may possess.

So far as I can see now, my discharge from imprisonment would not make the duty of fasting any the less imperative.

I am hoping, however, that all my fears are wholly unjustified and that the British Government have no intention whatever of creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes.

It is perhaps as well for me to refer to another matter that is agitating me and may also enforce a similar fast. It is the

way repression is going. I have no notion when I may receive a shock that would compel the sacrifice.

Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called the legitimate limit. A Governmental terrorism is spreading through the land. Both English and Indian officials are being brutalized. The latter, high and low, are becoming demoralized by reason of the Government rewarding as meritorious, disloyalty to the people and inhuman conduct towards their own kith and kin. The latter are being cowed down. Free speech has been stifled. Goondaism is being practised in the name of law and order. Women who have come out for public service stand in fear of their honour being insulted.

And all this, as it seems to me, is being done in order to crush the spirit of freedom which the Congress represents. Repression is not confined to punishing civil breaches of the common law. It goads people to break newly made orders of autocracy designed for the most part to humiliate them.

In all these doings as I read them, I see no spirit of democracy. Indeed, my recent visit to England has confirmed my opinion that your democracy is a superficial circumscribed thing. In the weightiest matters decisions are taken by individuals or groups, without any reference to the Parliament, and these have been ratified by the Members having but a vague notion of what they were doing. Such was the case with Egypt, the War of 1914, and such is the case with India. My whole being rebels against the idea that in a system called democratic, one man should have the unfettered power of affecting the destiny of the ancient people numbering over three hundred millions, and that his decisions can be enforced by mobilizing the most terrible forces of destruction. To me this is a negation of democracy.

And this repression cannot be prolonged without further embittering the already bitter relations between the two peoples. In so far as I am responsible and can help it, how am I to arrest the process? Not by stopping civil disobedience. For me it is an article of faith. I regard myself by nature a democrat. Democracy of my conception is wholly inconsistent with the use of physical force for enforcing its will. Civil resistance therefore has been conceived to be a proper substitute for physical force to be used wherever generally the latter is held necessary or justifiable. It is a process of self-suffering and a part of the plan is that in given circumstances a civil resister must sacrifice himself even by fasting to a finish. That moment has not yet arrived for me. I have no undeniable call from within for such a step. But the

events happening outside are alarming enough to agitate my fundamental being. Therefore, in writing to you about the possibility of a fast regarding Depressed Classes, I felt that I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you also that there was another possibility, not remote, of such a fast.

Needless to say that from my side absolute secrecy has been maintained about all the correspondence I have carried on with you. Of course Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai, who has just been sent to join us, know all about it. But you will no doubt make whatever use you wish of this letter.[1]

Yours sincerely,

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
WHITEHALL
LONDON

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(4), Pt. I, p. 5; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13-9-1932

219. LETTER TO DURGA M. DESAI

March 11, 1932

CHI. DURGA,

Mahadev arrived yesterday unexpectedly.[2] It seems the authorities thought that I must have one more companion besides Sardar. There is no cause for worry about my leg. There is a little inflammation at one spot. Treatment is going on. There is not the slightest [cause][3] for worry. You can always write to me anything you wish to. And you may come whenever you like.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You will find it convenient if you come with the party of visitors expected next week.[4]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9484

[1] For Sir Samuel Hoare's reply, *vide* Appendix III. For an account of Gandhiji's discussion with Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai on separate electorates and repression, *vide The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 4-5, 7 & 8.

[2] Mahadev Desai, addressee's husband, was transferred from Nasik Prison to Yeravda Central Prison.

[3] The source is mutilated here.

[4] This sentence is in Mahadev Desai's hand.

220. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN N. KHARE

March 11, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMIBEHN,

Instead of taking somebody's help to write a letter to me, why don't you write in Marathi? I will learn that much Marathi without effort. I understand what you say about the women. Whether or not there is an association, all of you there should meet from time to time and discuss subjects bearing on your spiritual progress.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 281. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

221. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

March 11, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

If the elders have gone to the temple[1], all of you should take up their work. Then you too will have followed them to the temple.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9466

222. LETTER TO NARAYAN DESAI

March 11, 1932

CHI. NARAYANRAO,

Now that you have graduated from Bablo[2] to Narayan, I suppose I may go further and make you a "Rao"[3]. Besides, Mahadev tells me that you seem to have learnt carding only recently. If that is true, it is proper that you should be addressed as

[1] The reference is to jail.
[2] A baby boy
[3] "Rao" and "Raosaheb" are honorific suffixes added to names of elders.

"Raosaheb". Mahadev is here now. You may send any messages you like. How many rounds do you spin daily?

Blessings from
BAPU

PS.

Since you card, Mahadev is eager to spin with slivers made by you. Send a few pads.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9475

223. LETTER TO A GIRL

March 12, 1932

CHI.,

Learning the *Gita* by heart only requires a good memory, and the task is easy. But understanding the meaning calls for the use of one's intellect. This is a difficult thing, and, therefore, uninteresting. When, however, you feel interest in exercising your intellect, the desire to understand the meaning will come to you. You should, therefore, learn to take interest in subjects which require you to use your intellect.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8963. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

224. A LETTER

March 12, 1932

CHI.,

There are numerous occasions for one to speak. You may have questions to ask in your class, or may have to speak when playing games or during the recess. It is our duty to spin and hence, if we do not spin, we neglect our duty. That means that we fall into a debt.

Just as the hand becomes dirty if we touch a dirty thing, so if we tell a lie the mind is defiled, and that is worse than the hand becoming dirty. We can wash the hand if it has become dirty. It is not as easy to purify the mind.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8965. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

225. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

March 12, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

If instead of reading many books we read only one and reflect over it and put its teaching into practice, we get the desired result. Sannyasa does not mean the renunciation of all activities; it means only the renunciation of activities prompted by desire and of the fruits of action performed as duty. This is real freedom from activity. That is why one must learn to see inactivity in activity and activity in inactivity. Freedom from activity means only one thing, and it is what I have explained above. And still one must win such freedom. This problem led to the idea of renunciation of the fruits of action.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 223. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

226. A LETTER

March 13, 1932

CHI.,

Family influences by themselves cannot ensure one's moral and spiritual progress. Such progress is impossible without effort on one's part. If there is no progress despite such effort, we need not worry. It is as true in the science of spiritual progress as it is in the science of mechanics that no force ever fails to produce its result. If five maunds of force push an object towards the north and an equal amount pushes it towards the south, the object will remain stationary, but both the forces will have done their full work and the stationary state of the object will in fact amount to its motion. It is this truth which suggested the method of working without attachment. We should go on doing our best.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8962. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

227. LETTER TO DAHIBEHN PATEL

March 13, 1932

CHI. DAHIBEHN,

I was very glad to get your letter. Has your brother completely recovered? Write to me from time to time. Nobody who has dedicated himself or herself to service has to go in search of work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9205

228. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

March 13, 1932

CHI. MANU,

Your description of Ajmer is good. But the handwriting is bad. Try and make it better in your future letters. I will look forward to descriptions of Jaipur and other places. Ask Dudhibehn to write to me. What is your weight?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7422. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

229. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

March 13, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

This time your handwriting was better than it generally is. If you persist in your effort and try to improve it, you will be able to make each letter in a word as beautiful as a pearl. Your speed in carding is good for your age, provided the slivers which you make are very fine.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 263-a. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

230. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

March 13, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. For some time I shall have to write with my left hand and I shall not, therefore, be able to write very long letters. The left hand cannot write as fast as the right hand can. True, Mahadev's help will be available, but dictating to him will be a new practice so far as letters written from jail are concerned. I shall see how far I can follow that practice. I shall have to observe whether I feel at ease in dictating letters which are prompted purely by love. I will certainly dictate letters of business.

I was not in the least pained by your letter.

All of us must grow or deteriorate in some measure every day. Nothing remains unchanging.[1]

When I take the blame upon myself, I do not act out of false humility and do not exaggerate. My taking the blame upon myself does not mean that others are exonerated. But the leader must take the discredit for failure as he does the credit for success.

I accept the need for inter-caste marriages up to a certain point.

If a husband has the right to divorce his wife, a wife should also have the right to divorce her husband. But generally I am against the practice of divorce. The bond of love ought to be indissoluble.

Boys and girls may be educated either separately or together. It depends on the subject of study. They will have to study law together. I cannot lay down in this matter one single rule which can be followed in all countries and in all circumstances. The problem is not a simple one. No one has been able to demonstrate decisive results in any country in this field. The whole matter is in an experimental stage.

Beauty should certainly be praised, but silent praise is better. Moreover, तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः[2] Of one who is not filled with joy by

[1] In her reply to Gandhiji's letter dated February 25 (*vide* pp. 156-8.), the addressee had stated that if Gandhiji had stopped growing in stature whether in or out of jail, she would admire him less.

[2] "Renounce and enjoy" (*Ishopanishad*, 1)

the beauty of the sky, it may be said that nothing will please him. But those who dream, in the delirium of their joy, of building a flight of steps to reach the constellations live in ignorance.

I liked the curriculum[1]. I don't think I can suggest just now any changes or improvements in it.

As regards Japan and China, our sympathy is bound to be on the side of the latter. But the real position seems to be as I have described it in my letter to a child.

What you write about Jamnadas is true. He seems troubled in mind but keeps his problem to himself. If Sushila[2] can understand what troubles him, something can be done to help him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10276. Also C.W. 6724. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

231. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

March 13, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

I have written at length about speaking in some other letter and you may read it.[3] God has given us the various abilities to control them, and some to suppress them altogether. He has given us a mouth not to go on speaking in season and out of season, but to speak for doing God's work. God has given us abilities for doing both good and evil but we have to get rid of the evil impulses completely. Do you understand now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3983. Also C.W. 29. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

[1] For the Ashram school
[2] A friend of the addressee
[3] *Vide* "A Letter", p. 195.

232. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

March 13, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

If a girl's letter does not contain anything which requires a reply, she should not expect a letter by return of post. Your last letter was of that kind. But since you have asked me to write to you every week, I have written this letter. However, in future bear in mind what I have said.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Is there any news about Narahari?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5768. Also C.W. 2991. Courtesy: Vanamala Desai

233. *LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS*

March 14, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I got your letter. It is not right for a *brahmachari* to attend to several things at a time. He takes up only one thing at a time and concentrates all the energy of his body and mind on that thing. If, therefore, you are occupied in manual work and there is no necessity for you to talk about anything relating to it, the proper thing would be to remain silent. However, if we are playing or have gone out for a walk, talking is a part of the activity and so we can talk at that time. Anybody who regulates his life strictly according to this principle, can make it full of interest. And an institution where people work in complete silence and speak only when necessary impresses us as a very quiet place. Not only do I see no harm in the girls putting on shorts and a shirt when doing exercises and also at other times, but I actually like the thing. For the Ashram residents their goal in life has already been fixed, and it is that they are dedicated to the quest for truth. To your question whether one should or should not aim to be like

a soldier, I shall give an answer after you tell me in your next letter what all of you understand to be the meaning of the word 'soldier'.

After travelling in many countries, I have found India to be the most beautiful country. But since I am free, as I believe, from blind partiality, I have always been able to see much good in every country and so have found them all to be good and have appreciated the special excellence of each of them. On the whole, however, I have felt that India is not inferior to any other country, that one finds in it all that one may want and that what one does not find in India is not quite essential for our life.

If the Ashram has money to spare and if the things are not likely to cost much, even at such a time as the present I would have no objection to having swings and slides made for you. You should, however, bear one thing in mind, namely, that the Ashram should always be a poor people's institution, and that just because the Ashram has the necessary money we will not be justified in getting anything we want. And even things which befit poor people may be ordered only if the Ashram has the necessary funds. The question, therefore, is only whether we can afford a thing and whether it is in keeping with our aim.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8968. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

234. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

March 14, 1932

BA,

For some days past I had been thinking of writing to you; and I read today that you were still out. And so I had a mind to write. Mahadev also is with us now. Thus our company has become larger. All three of us are quite well. Ramdas came and saw me. He was all right. Write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

235. IMAM SAHEB – II[1]

March 14, 1932

As we know, Imam Saheb had set much store by patriotic considerations in arranging the marriages of his two daughters. He wanted to marry them to young men who would devote themselves to the service of the country, would make no difference between Hindus and Muslims and who would, by their manner of living, do honour to the Ashram ideal of life. And so he selected two Gujarati Muslims from families of average means.

My first meeting with Imam Saheb may be said to have taken place in 1903 in South Africa after my return to that country. He used to tell me that we had met once before that but I have no recollection of that meeting. When I set up practice as a lawyer in Johannesburg, he used to accompany clients to my office. He was an altogether different man then in appearance and manners. He used to dress himself in English style, and wore a Turkish cap. I immediately recognized his intelligence, but otherwise he did not produce a good impression on me at first. I thought him rather obstinate, but, as I came to know him better, I liked him more and more.

I saw, as I had more and more experience of dealing with him, that what I had thought to be obstinacy was only his eagerness to understand fully the implications of every point. If he held an opinion on any matter, he would not give it up till his reason was convinced of his error. He would not take a lawyer's word as gospel truth in legal matters merely because he himself was not a lawyer, but would argue against him even in such matters. Though he had had no education, he had complete confidence in his judgement. Moreover, he had a proud sense of self-respect. I, therefore, saw very soon that he had sufficient strength of mind to cling to his own view without being overawed by anybody.

In the beginning, Imam Saheb used to come to me on behalf of clients and explain their cases to me. But he took interest in current affairs and would draw me into discussion about them. He evinced keen interest in discussing the hardships of our countrymen in South Africa and took part in the meetings, etc.

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi"; *vide* the following item.

On most issues he supported me, but he never hesitated to oppose me even in public whenever he did not approve of my stand. Gradually, however, he was drawn towards me and, when the satyagraha commenced, proved himself as steadfast as a rock. Some fell and some weakened, and some opposed me bitterly, but I don't remember Imam Saheb to have wavered at any time. When he was imprisoned for the first time, nobody expected that he would remain strong till the end. On the contrary, many persons told me, including some who held him in high respect, that he would not go to jail again, that he had a delicate constitution, was pleasure-loving and had many wants. This was on the whole true. However, Imam Saheb never weakened, whereas I saw many who were known to be simple in their habits withdrawing from the struggle. Imam Saheb's capacity for self-sacrifice was very great, and, though he would think long before taking a decision, he showed wonderful strength in clinging to a decision once taken.

When Imam Saheb plunged into the struggle, he had no thought at all that he would have to break up his home and embrace a life of complete renunciation. As soon, however, as he saw that if he wished to remain staunch in the satyagraha movement he would have to give up the attachment to his home, he did so almost in an instant. This was no small sacrifice on his part.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

236. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Monday, March 14, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Mahadev has joined me in the nick of time for my right hand has just gone out of service. By this I do not meant that it is continually paining, but I certainly mean that it would start doing so if I went on writing with it or doing any other work. It may even happen that I shall never be able now to do much work with it, for, I see that, though I gave it complete rest during the return voyage from England, it has not recovered sufficiently well so that I could resume working with it. We need not feel sorry even if it becomes useless for ever. Sooner or later all the bodily organs will have become weak. We need not, therefore, feel concerned when we see them gradually

becoming so. It is no small grace of God that I have taken from the right hand the service which I have done. And, after all, as our [spiritual] dictionary[1] tells us, it is He who takes work from us, and He will do so as long as He wills and on His own condition. Our hands and feet are His tools, and it will be enough if we knowingly do nothing to impair their efficiency. We were foolish to the extent that we misused them in the past. It is because we misuse our body that, when what we call old age arrives, our limbs and organs begin to decay. To one who has never misused his bodily organs, old age will not be painful but, on the contrary, it will bring happiness. If trees were thinking beings, we can easily see that they would feel no pain when their fruits, fully ripe, fell to the ground. Rather, the knowledge that these fruits would be used by human beings would make them happy. Similarly, he whose life is good must feel confident that when old age has worn out the strength of his body, his new condition will serve some greater good. But, as things are, all this seems to us as mere wise talk, for we see no instances in the world, or very few, of perfectly happy old age. Similarly, we rarely see a person who welcomes his death as a friend.

The health of all three of us may be described as good. It is true that Mahadev has been suffering pain in the bone of one of his legs, but rest and sun-bath will probably cure it. There is no cause for worry.

You have given no news about Khushalbhai during the past week. I infer from this that the cloud has dispersed for the time being.

The position about visitors is still not clear. It is not improbable that the practice may have to be stopped. However, I believe Jaisukhlal, Kashi, Lakshmi and Moti will have come and seen me in a day or two.

Haridas Gandhi[2] has been brought here. He is still in the hospital. We get reports about his health from time to time, but none of us has yet been able to see him. Ramdas came and saw me. Most probably I shall be able to see the others too. I had expected a letter from Mirabehn, but I have received none so far.

It was reported in the newspapers that Gangabehn Jhaveri has been released. It seems somebody paid the fine on her behalf. Who was that person? Do you get any news about Prabhavati?

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*

[2] A resident of Amreli who came to join the Ashram

You should not mind the expenditure on behalf of Radha. I hope Punjabhai has recovered now.

You may write to Holmes about the permission which those gentlemen from New York have asked for. Or, it might be better to send a cable. Since you cannot give a final reply to Holmes within Rs. 25, you had better send a cable to the others as follows:

"Authorizing Rev. Holmes Community Church New York do needful."[1]

Send a copy of the cable to Holmes and tell him that, if he thinks fit, he may give them the permission they have asked for.

Lilavati told me that the preparation of almonds which she had brought for me was made of a mixture of almonds and dates. If I can know how it is made and in what proportion the ingredients are mixed, we may be able to make it here. It does not seem proper that you should send a parcel of the thing from there periodically, and even if I don't mind your doing so I must know the quantities of the ingredients, for otherwise I can not judge how much of the preparation I should eat daily.

I had read in the papers about Brijkishan[2].

Blessings from
BAPU[3]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8214. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

237. *LETTER TO RUKMINI BAZAJ*

March 14, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI,

I got your letter.

I would prefer 'Madhavdas' to 'Madhavlal'. But these days a good many people do not like the suffix 'das'. Did Santok like my suggestion?[4] You should also discuss the matter with Benarsi and then decide. Please do not think that the name

[1] The source has these words in English.

[2] Brijkrishna Chandiwala, who was arrested on February 22. 1932. and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine

[3] For the article "Imam Saheb–II" which followed, vid' item.

[4] *Vide* "Letter to Rukmini Bazaj", p. 175.

selected by me should be approved. Do not neglect to write to me after going to Kashi.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9061

238. LETTER TO SHANTILAL MEHTA

March 14, 1932

CHI. SHANTI,

I got your letter. I was happy. Why have you not mentioned where you got married? I was glad that the marriage ceremony was simple. Did you go for the ceremony alone or were you accompanied by any elders? Manilal does not seem to have arrived last week, but there was a letter from him in which he said that he would be positively here in a fortnight or two. If you can settle down peacefully in your town, I think it would be better for you to remain in India. What would your wife like? Has she had some education? I should know that too. Without that information I cannot rush forward with an opinion.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./XXII

239. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Monday, March 14 [1932][1]

DEAR SISTERS,

I am glad that you want a letter from me. I will make today's letter brief. It is not good that your Association has not been working. Even though your number has become small, it would be good if you can run the Association. Its usefulness may not be apparent now, and it is also likely that there would be obstacles of various kinds in the beginning. However, if you persist and carry it on, it is bound to prove useful. To do so, you should find out collective activities, no matter how small,

[1] From the reference in the letter to Gandhiji's writing to the addressees earlier about "women in other countries", *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", pp. 33-4.

which will be known as the Association's activities and in running which everyone would acquire a sense of personal responsibility. This does not at all mean that you are merely to add one more activity to several others; it means that the Association should take upon itself one or more of the activities being conducted at present. Do not fall a victim to the false notion that women cannot work as a team. I wrote to you earlier how much the women in other countries are able to do. Even here we have some examples; if there are none, we have to provide them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

240. LETTER TO NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE

March 14, 1932

CHI.,

You two have shown a new path.[1] Both of you have my blessings. Sardar voluntarily adds his. We wish that you two should devote yourselves to selfless service. That your request for blessings comes on a printed card makes the request purely formal and to that extent it loses its value. If blessings are worth soliciting, they are worth soliciting in a self-written letter, which should also state some good resolutions made by the couple to mark the auspicious event.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 15

241. LETTER TO CHILDREN

March 14, 1932

Even if the present stage [of the struggle] lasts a long time, our energies must not flag, as flag they must in case we are unhappy about it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 15

[1] The addressees had asked for blessings, not as usual on the occasion of their wedding, but after the event had taken place.

242. A LETTER

March 14, 1932

I further believe that marriages should be contracted out of caste. Even though the choice is extended up to the Vaishya community only, it will suffice. But no hindrance should be placed if a worthy match is found only outside the Vaishya community and the girl likes him.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 15

243. LETTER TO R. V. MARTIN

March 15, 1932

DEAR MAJOR MARTIN,

I revert to my letter[1] of the 1st instant. I was thankful for the permission to see my son Ramdas Gandhi whilst the whole of my request was under consideration. It is high time however that an early decision was given. The matter has for me assumed extraordinary urgency because a co-prisoner Haridas Gandhi is seriously ill and has lost considerable weight. He has lived for a long time at the Ashram. I believe that I exercise greater influence over him than his father and I know that the very fact of mv seeing him will put life into him. I would like the Government 'ze that young men like Haridas who have come under my : are no less to me than Ramdas Gandhi. It is impossible therefore to be at ease whilst this matter of seeing the :isoners is hanging fire, especially in view of serious illness Iaridas Gandhi. I request an answer by Friday morning.[2]

Yours sincerely,

ay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File 10)(14)

'e p. 173.

: Martin's letter to the Home Department, Bombay Government, latter's communication to the Inspector-General of Prisons, *vide* IV.

244. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

March 16, 1932

It is possible and necessary to treat human beings on terms of equality, but this can never apply to their morals[1]. One would be affectionate and attentive to a rascal and to a saint; but one cannot and must not put saintliness and rascality on the same footing.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 15

245. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

March 16, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I got your card. In the letter which has been lost in transit, I had asked you whether there was any rule regarding the use of *ze*, and *se*, *sin*, *hai*, *he*.

For example, why should *khaas* be spelt with *swad* and why not with *se* or *sin*. Why *sin* and not *swad* in *salaam*? Or why not *se*? In spelling *galat*, why *toi* and not *te*? Then I had copied the following *ghazal*:

> Life in this world called beautiful garden is only for a short while; you will enjoy the spectacle for a few days only. O traveller, prepare for the march; residence on earth is short. When the great Hakim Lukman was asked, "How long will you live?"—rubbing his hands in despair he replied: "Only a few days." After burial the angel of death said in the grave: "You will sleep here only for a few days."[2]

I trust you will consider this much enough for today, seeing that writing with the left hand takes time. The Urdu handwriting is of course very bad, but I am sure you will have no difficulty in deciphering it. Mahadev has now been brought to stay with us here. He remembers your [favourite] *bhajan* "Awake and arise, O traveller!" Once it was even sung at prayer-time. Next time I shall send it to you in Urdu script.

Are you quite well? Where is Pashabhai? Blessings to Dahyabhai. Our *vandemataram* and many many *salaams* to Mother.

[1] *Mahadevbhaini Diary* has 'manner'.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 436.

Tell Father that we saw in *The Leader* his photograph with the Aligarh students. We had a hearty laugh at the sight of his face hidden away in the beard. Write to me how Hamida and Rohini are faring. My blessings to them all. Blessings to Sohaila also and kisses to the baby.

I hope this letter will reach you all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9638

246. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

March 18, [1932][1]

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

When I gave you the three names[2], I did not think of the female ward at all. But there are many Ashram inmates in that ward. I would therefore for the time being drop out Sjt. Chhaganlal Joshi and have Shrimati Gangabehn Vaidya instead.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5129

247. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 18, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your packet yesterday, that is, on Thursday. Harjivan[3] and Sharda wish to come here and see me. They may do so now. The present position is that those inmates of the Ashram who do not take part in political activities can visit me. About others, correspondence is going on. Only those who are regularly engaged in Congress work can be described as taking part in political activities. According to this criterion, only Mahadev, Devdas and Pyarelal can be described as doing that. To some extent Valji also may be classed with them, but none of the others. However, those who are carrying on picketing at present must be described

[1] From *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 17-8
[2] Haridas Gandhi, Narsinhbhai Ishwarbhai Patel and Chhaganlal Joshi
[3] Harjivan Kotak whose wife was Sharda

[as 'political']. Since the whole business is left to my good faith, the final responsibility rests on me. Hence Bal and other boys and girls who are doing picketing should be excluded. Any of the other inmates can come. Not more than five should come at a time. As I have already explained in a previous letter, it is not necessary that five persons, or even one, should come every week. But anyone who wishes to come has my permission to do so, within the limits explained above.

It will be necessary to send the names to the Superintendent in advance, and no one else should be included later. It will be more convenient to see me between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on any day, except Sundays and other holidays. I think I have now explained the whole matter sufficiently clearly. There is nothing more, except that, if those who wish to come give their names to you in advance, please send them to me so that I might be ready. . . .[1]

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–9: Shri Narandas Gandhine, Pt. I, pp. 322-3

248. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

March 20, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

Even if we spin to meet our own requirements, the country gains since it means so much addition to its wealth. And, moreover, we shall have set an example of spending one's time usefully and of self-reliance.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9467. Also C.W. 8972. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The letter is incomplete in the source.

249. A LETTER

March 20, 1932

CHI.,

When manure is spread in the field, it becomes fine earth and the gases which are generated in the process serve as food for the trees. Similarly, so long as the saliva remains in the mouth and the mouth is healthy, it helps to digest food. When, however, it is spat out, it makes dirt. Mixing with dust, it breeds germs. The point is that in its own place nothing is dirty, and the second point is that dirt is made by man. We should know this and understand and observe the rules of sanitation.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8975. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

250. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

March 20, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

The stars and the constellations which we see in the heavens are so many images of God.

Indian women's dress has appealed to me as the best. Mahavir, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed and other teachers have sung praises of one and the same God.

Most of the education for women should be the same as for men. There may be some difference bearing on the special functions and duties of women.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9907. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

251. A LETTER

March 20, 1932

CHI.,

It is true that in many places people take more freedom than is proper. Such things always happen whenever there is popular awakening. Self-control cannot be forced on anybody. We should be strict in our own conduct and be liberal towards others. What we regard as excessive freedom may, however, be moderation for those concerned. One person may take milk as medicine and another may consume it to pamper himself. Such things happen every day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8979. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

252. LETTER TO GANGABEHN JHAVERI

March 20, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN (JHAVERI),

Narandas must have explained to you the whole position regarding your coming to see me. The Government's order on the subject means that those who have been taking active part in the struggle cannot come. This does not apply to relations. I don't regard this issue as worth fighting for and, therefore, I think I should be satisfied with the facility which they permit. You may write a letter and say in it what you wish to, or send a message with somebody else who may be coming. You cannot ask me anything concerning the struggle. A prisoner has no right, and is not fit, to express any opinion about anything concerning himself. How did you keep in jail? Narrate your experience. Who do you think paid the fine?

Blessin
B

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3949. Als
Gangabehn Jhaveri

253. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

March 20, 1932

CHI. MANGALA (DARLING),

When we get swaraj, we will certainly do a great many things. You will see caves and many other things besides. But there are many interesting things to see all around us, and we can see them even today. If you know how to see these, then alone will you see other things correctly. Have you learnt to look at the sky? I am learning to do it in my old age.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4079. Also C.W. 43. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

254. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

March 20, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

By spinning as a form of *yajna*, we produce yarn for the poor. Other people will follow our example and spin, and we become one with the poor and in that way are purified.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 264. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

255. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

March 20, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

Brushing the teeth with *datan*[1] should be supplemented by the use of fingers. That is, rub the gums vigorously with the fingers while gargling after you have brushed the teeth with *datan* and cleansed the tongue with the twig. One suffering from pyorrhoea

[1] Same as *datun*; *vide* p. 31.

should brush the teeth with *datan* twice daily, and I would not think it too much to give half an hour each time. I have come across negroes brushing their teeth at all times in the day. The benefit from the use of *datan* is not merely that the teeth are brushed with it, but also that all the poisonous matter in the gums is thrown out with the fluids discharged from the mouth while crushing the *datan*, as we spit out the fluids entirely. I myself use nothing else except common salt with the *datan*. Of course, my brushing the teeth does not mean much, because I have not a single tooth left in the upper jaw and even in the lower only a few remain. Both the babul and the *neem* twigs are good for *datan* but perhaps the *neem* is likely to be better for one suffering from pyorrhoea as the bitterness of the *neem* is highly beneficial.

There is not the slightest need for the girls to use a fountain pen. Really speaking, nobody in the Ashram should need a fountain pen. Why should anybody be in such hurry? For students at any rate, it is certainly a harmful thing to use. The reed-pen is the best for writing Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu and other Indian scripts. We should teach the children to use it properly.

During prayers at the Ashram, none should start reciting or singing before the leader begins. And again, the rule is that when he leads, only those can join in the recitation or singing who can do so in tune. When the whole community sings harmoniously in one tune, their singing never fails to produce an effect. Nor does silence fail. Both are beneficial, each in its proper place. In offering oblations, etc., at a sacrifice, the incantations used to be chanted aloud in the belief that thousands were witnessing the ceremony with reverence. Once that became a custom, even when only five or ten persons are present the incantations at a sacrifice continue to be chanted aloud.

The observance of one principal vow mostly includes that of several minor ones.

Just as a *neem* tree comes out of another *neem* tree, so human beings are born from human beings, and just as the general properties of the *neem* are transmitted from one to another, so are those of human beings. But because of several other factors which also operate, the transmission of all characteristics is not, as it should not be, maintained. Moreover, we observe certain peculiarities in man also because of the difference that exists between man and other living creatures.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7492. Also C.W. 4969. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

256. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

March 20, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

Would a Sardar write letters? He would act as Sardar and ask others to write on his behalf.

This time your handwriting was good. If you pay careful attention, it is bound to improve. Was there any letter from Kamala?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3984. Also C.W. 30. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

257. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

March 20, 1932

BHAI VALJI,

I got your letter. No argument of yours or mine will avail. How can anybody argue against a law? One may, against a bill. If you do without an introduction, the thing may be possible.

If children play cards during their recreation time, you cannot forbid them. We cannot forbid even grown-up people if they play. We may tell them that it would be better if they did not play. They should not play for stakes. What is your argument against cards?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7423. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

258. IMAM SAHEB–III[1]

March 21, 1932

We should remember that Imam Saheb had set up his home in English style. Haji Saheba had lived in that style from her very birth. Fatima and Amina also were brought up like English children. For one who had lived in this manner, it was extremely difficult to curtail his heavy expenditure and adopt an utterly simple mode of life. For Imam Saheb, however, once he had made up his mind to do a particular thing, it was quite easy to carry out his resolve. And, therefore, when I decided to leave Johannesburg and to settle in Phœnix, he himself proposed that he, too, would live there. Though I knew his firmness of mind, I was completely at a loss what to say in reply to his proposal. I described to him the hardships of life in Phœnix. A man who had never put his body to the slightest trouble and had always lived surrounded by comforts and luxuries, I wondered how such a person would be able to start forthwith living like a labourer. Even if he himself could bear the hardships of life in Phœnix, what about Haji Saheba, and Fatima and Amina, I asked. Imam Saheb's reply was brief. He said: "I have put my trust in God. And you do not know Haji Saheba. She will always be ready to live where I live, and as I live. If, therefore, you have no other difficulty in the matter, I have decided to come and live in Phœnix. No one knows when the struggle will end. I don't think I shall be able to carry on my old business of supplying coaches on hire, or take up any other occupation. Like you, I too have realized that a satyagrahi should give up love of wealth and possessions." Imam Saheb's proposal pleased me very much. I wrote to my co-workers in Phœnix. They also welcomed the proposal. And so Imam Saheb and his family came over.

Many inmates of the Ashram probably do not know that Imam Saheb joined the residents of Phœnix in all their activities. Everybody fetched water for his or her own use from a spring below. It flowed at some depth below the level of the Phœnix Settlement. The Phœnix buildings were on a hill and one had to climb about fifty feet to reach the place. Imam Saheb had a

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi"; *vide* the following item.

delicate constitution even at that time, but every morning one saw him walking down to the spring with a *kavad*[1] on his shoulders and climbing up slowly with the buckets filled with water. The place now occupied by the spinning-wheel in the Ashram was held in Phœnix by the printing press. All the inmates, boys and girls, old men and women, educated and uneducated, had to work in some department of the press. There were all kinds of big or small tasks, composing, folding the printed copies of the paper, making wrappers, pasting stamps, moving the wheel with the hand whenever the machine stopped, etc., etc. Everybody was required to give some time and help in these tasks, especially on the day on which the journal was to be published. Imam Saheb, Haji Saheba, Fatima and Amina, all four of them joined in this work. Imam Saheb had learned composing. For a man of his temper and habits and of his age, this was indeed wonderful. In this way, Imam Saheb identified himself completely with the life at Phœnix. He and the other members of his family were non-vegetarian, but I don't remember any time when they cooked such food at Phœnix.

This, however, does not mean that Imam Saheb was in any way a less devout Muslim. He never missed *namaz*, nor did he or his family ever fail to observe the *roza*. By adopting the manner of life of the other inmates and making a sacrifice for their sake, he really demonstrated the nobility of Islamic culture.

Imam Saheb's capacity for self-sacrifice was to be put to a still severe test. He went to jail again several times, and proved himself a model prisoner. When, however, in the year 1914 it was decided that most of the inmates of the Ashram should return to India, leaving only a few of them in Phœnix, Imam Saheb was put to a real test. South Africa had practically become his home. Haji Saheba, Fatima and Amina were complete strangers to India and did not know any Indian language—a little English and Dutch was all the language that they knew. But Imam Saheb took no time to come to a decision. He had made up his mind that he and his family would live wherever I did. That was his self-sacrifice for the cause of satyagraha and his contribution towards Hindu-Muslim unity.

All the inmates of the Ashram know about his life after his coming to India. I am convinced that he was rising higher day by day: his heart was becoming purer, his devotion to God was

[1] Two baskets or vessels suspended from the ends of a stick carried horizontally over the shoulders

becoming deeper and his faith in the Ashram rules also was increasing. But it is not my intention here to give reminiscences of his life in India. I should like everybody who came into close contact with Imam Saheb to write down his experiences, and all such accounts to be put together with these reminiscences.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

259. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

March 19/21, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I wrote a letter[1] to you yesterday and handed it over today for posting. I hope you will get it in time. It contains detailed instructions regarding visits and Champa. In this letter, therefore, I don't say anything about these matters. That letter also contains something more.

I saw Haridas Gandhi, Chhaganlal and Narasinhbhai today. I shall now be able to see three [prisoners] every fortnight, and in this way I shall be able to know the conditions of the co-workers who are lodged in this jail and help them whenever I can. Haridas is considerably reduced, but his illness is more mental than physical. He is being well looked after. You will learn more details from my letter to Kamala. If she wants to come and see Haridas, she may do so. If she comes on a day on which other inmates of the Ashram are visiting me and her name is included in the five, she will be able to see both of us.

Hemprabhadevi frequently writes to me directly, and I also reply to her directly. That lady's goodness, her courage and industry and her intelligence fill me with wonder. Let me hear whenever you get any news about Janakibehn and Jamnalal, though I believe Madanmohan[2] also will write to me from time to time. I take it that Chimanlal's operation is over. Who performed it? Who is the vaid treating Triveni and Dudhibehn? Take prompt measures and cure your scabies. The application of the wet sheet pack is bound to cure it. I don't know what advice I should give you regarding the land in Bidaj. Do what you think right in the circumstances. Raojibhai cannot see you. I didn't see any letter from Ranchhodbhai. Your list too did not contain his name.

[1] *Vide* pp. 210-1.
[2] Jamnalal Bajaj's Secretary

March 21, 1932

Read my letter to Tilak[am]. If he falls ill repeatedly for want of meat in his diet, and if he wishes to have it, we should inquire and find a place where he can get it. If you don't approve of this, let me know. I did this [in the past] for two or three co-workers. It is not, therefore, anything unusual which I am suggesting.

You should, if necessary, even free Hariyomal from active work and force him to attend to the improvement of his health.

What do you intend to do about Daya, who is being called away by her father? You must have read my letter to her.

Write to me in detail about your scabies.

Blessings from
BAPU[1]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8215. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

260. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

March 21, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

There is of course no sin if one has to go to answer calls of nature during the hours for manual work, but it is certainly a bad habit. A boy or girl who feels interested in such work should attend to calls before joining it. Moreover, one who has a fixed time for such calls would always go at that time. If the hours for manual work come together, then a person would certainly have to go during that period. For this reason, manual work is never prescribed for more than four consecutive hours.

Spinning is primarily an education, for it arouses in us a sense of the duty of service, we learn in it a very useful occupation and there is beautiful art in it.

One never goes to join any work unless the wish is there. But children who are not properly trained never feel the desire to do a good thing. The best rule, therefore, is to join in good work whether the desire is there or not. A child who does this regularly comes to like the work in course of time, that is, he feels a desire to join it. If we always follow only our desires, we would

[1] For the article "Imam Saheb–III" which followed, *vide* the preceding item.

become self-indulgent. We should try our best to save ourselves from that fate. You may say of me that my favourite subjects were languages and geometry.

You can come when Narandas permits you to do so, but it would be good if you control your desire to come. Remember that we are poor, wish to remain so and aspire to vie with our starving countrymen.

I will now narrate an incident.

I see here with my own eyes something I had formerly heard about. We have here a cat which, when it wants to answer nature's call, goes to a place where it would not be observed by anybody. It finds for the purpose a dusty spot and, after answering the call, scratches the ground and covers up the faeces with earth. After doing that, the cat sniffs at the spot and, if there is the slightest smell, it throws more earth on the spot. On seeing this, I asked myself: 'Do all of us cover up the excreta as carefully as this cat does?' We daily bow to Mother Earth and ask her forgiveness for walking on her with our feet; but do we cover up the ground after spitting, blowing our nose or passing urine, etc.? Those who have not been observing this rule should start doing so immediately.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8982. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

261. A LETTER

March 21, 1932

CHI.,

The real pleasure of being a prisoner lies in having no visitor. . . .[1]

As one should not eat hastily, so also one should not write in a hurry. The ideal is to avoid haste in all matters. If a person has to do anything in haste, that means that he has been too slow before. Non-attachment and haste cannot go with each other.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8969. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Omission as in the source

262. *LETTER TO JUGATRAM DAVE*

March 21, 1932

BHAI,

We did expect a letter from you. All those who are born do not reach maturity.[1] Moreover, when an epidemic breaks out the death-rate goes up. Hence I am not surprised by what you write. It is a wonder and a matter of joy that the death-rate has not been higher. And, in any case, why should we grieve over death? The death of one who is fit to die may deserve to be welcomed. Moreover, is it not true that people die only to be born again? Hence, there is no reason for sorrow at all. One who has not learnt the art of going his way alone may be upset by external events. But only they who are strong enough to stand alone will realize the God of Truth.

From Gujarati: C.W. 8970. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 27

263. *A LETTER*

March 21, 1932

CHI.,

As grain is the body's food, so worship is the soul's. He who is convinced about the existence of the soul cannot live without worship. Prayer means the soul turning towards God.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8973. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The addressee had complained about those who had dropped out of the struggle.

264. *LETTER TO BOYS AND GIRLS*

March 21, 1932

CHI.,

Do you remember my definition of God? Instead of saying that God is Truth, I say that Truth is God. I did not always think thus. I realized this only four years ago. But without knowing it I always acted as if it was so. I have always known God as Truth. There was a time when I doubted the existence of God, but even at that time I did not doubt the existence of Truth. This Truth is not a material quality but is pure consciousness. That alone holds the universe together. It is God because it rules the whole universe. If you follow this idea, it contains the answer to all your other questions. If you have any difficulty, however, put your question to me. For me this is almost a matter of direct experience. I say "almost" because I have not seen face to face God Who is Truth. I have had only a glimpse of Him. But my faith is unshakable.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8974. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 27

265. *LETTER TO PURATAN BUCH*

March 21, 1932

CHI. PURATAN,

Wasn't the operation completely successful? What is the complaint now? I do not mind your question. My spiritual seeking, whether or not original, has always been in the form of social service. Such service is an essential part of the quest for truth.

Where do you live?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9164. Also C.W. 8971. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

266. *LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI*

March 21, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter. Pyarelal and Gulzarilal[1] keep good health. If you are permitted, go and see them[2] and others as well. Can it be said that you keep good health?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1831

267. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

March 21, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

I have explained about plays in my previous letter[3]. Did you receive any letter from Narahari from Belgaum? If you did, what does he write? Are all [the prisoners] kept together?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5769. Also C.W. 2992. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

268. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

March 21, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

Whenever I decide to write only with the left hand, my writing work is automatically restricted. This is because the habit of writing with the right hand has still not lost its force. The paper and other articles which I have brought from England

[1] Gulzarilal Nanda

[2] In Dhulia Jail

[3] There is no mention of 'plays' in the previous letter dated March 13; *vide*, howevever, "Letter to Indu Parekh", p. 232 and "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 24/29-3-1932.

are to be used up. If that is likely to confuse our minds [in regard to the vow of swadeshi], they may be put away in a safe place. We will use them later. I have forgotten the circumstances relating to the article with the locket. Nothing has come with me which had no historical value. Just now, therefore, everything should be kept in a safe place. Those articles which you think can be utilized may be used.

Abhiman in the sense of firm determination is necessary in regard to *yajna*, but *abhiman* in the sense of pride—that pride which makes you think how strong you are and feel confident that you will never miss your *yajna*—such *abhiman* should be shunned.

I would have to answer your question about Meghji[1] only if I claimed that I could not be bound by human attachments. We may try to free ourselves from their bondage, but should not give up tenderness of heart or our desire to serve human beings. The thought of what will happen after someone's death springs from foolishness, not from human attachment. Everyone is to die sooner or later. Knowing this, why should we worry over death? Moreover, having surrendered ourselves as puppets in the hands of the Master, how can we bargain with Him? He may make us dance as He wills. After all, what matters is that we should be able to dance. If a person can always dance, what else can he ask for?

It is very good indeed that you are making progress in your music.[2] If it is necessary to get your tonsils removed, do so.

The matter about visitors from outside the Ashram has not been settled. I have included Sushila's name [in the list of visitors].

In asking me to discuss your defects, do you want me to praise you? I do not at all wish to tell you your defects. Haven't I pointed them out more than once? Let me know how many of them you have overcome; we shall talk about others afterwards.

Devotees of God and such other people can cultivate equal-mindedness only in a certain measure. He in whom it becomes perfect must be God. But, then, there is only one God. Hence, even the most perfect human being will have equal-mindedness in an imperfect measure. That is why we see differences in people's beliefs and conflicts among them. We need not be unhappy

[1] One of the three children who died of smallpox. Their parents had taken Gandhiji's advice and refused to have the children vaccinated. On all the three occasions Gandhiji was perturbed and could not sleep.

[2] The addressee was taking lessons from N. M. Khare.

about this. The world is the effect of discord. Our duty lies in cultivating a greater degree of equal-mindedness every day. If we try to do this, the presence of discord in the world will cease to hurt us and become bearable, may even seem beautiful.

We need not believe that everything in India is better than elsewhere. Moreover, rise and fall is the law of the world. On the whole, there is much good in India. That is why it became a conquered country, and not a conquering country. At the basis of this attitude is the belief that an oppressor is in a worse state than his slave.

What books on astronomy and which of the works of Upton Sinclair do we have?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10277. Also C.W. 6725. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

269. *LETTER TO MADALASA BAJAJ*

March 21, 1932

CHI. MADALASA,

From my letter to Vatsala you will find replies to some of your questions too. Since milk didn't seem to agree with me here, I said so in my letter. It is possible that one does not require milk when leading a quiet life.

Cereals and other grains should not be eaten uncooked. Leafy vegetables, carrots, etc., can be. If they are cooked, they lose part of their nutrient value.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchaven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 312

270. *LETTER TO A GIRL*[1]

March 21, 1932

Realizing the sense of brotherhood is the most important thing in the observance of *brahmacharya*. We all are children of the same Father, how can we at all marry? Food must be eaten only as medicine, not for pleasure of the palate. Mind and body should be kept occupied in service. Meditate over *Satyanarayana*[2]. Cut off your hair regardless of people's opinion if you feel it is your duty. Remain ever absorbed in service as a form of devotion to God.

Keep up a constant struggle against the passions, holding them to be our real enemy. This very struggle has been delineated in the *Mahabharata*.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 27

271. *LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON*

March 22, 1932

MY DEAR AGATHA,

You will recognize this hand[3]. Mahadev came in just when my right hand had begun to refuse to work for me, not that there is any continuing pain but writing with it is difficult. I do a fair amount of writing with the left hand and am using Mahadev's hand whenever I can.

You [talk][4] of Dr. Ramchandra Rao. I can't identify him. He is not likely to be permitted to see me. We are now three and we are all keeping quite well, and having a fair stock of books, newspapers and spinning-wheels, we have enough to occupy our time.

With love,[5]

Yours sincerely,
BAPU[6]

From a photostat: G.N. 1452

[1] The addressee was aspiring to observe *brahmacharya*.
[2] God in the form of Truth
[3] Mahadev Desai's
[4] A word here is illegible in the source.
[5] & [6] These words are in Gandhiji's hand.

272. LETTER TO DR. C. MUTHU

March 22, 1932

I was delighted to hear from you and to have a copy of the new edition of that excellent book[1] of yours. I am going to read it again. Please don't worry about my food. I have not yet had to resume milk. I fancy that when one is leading a quiet and contemplative life, one does not need the stimulation of milk and its vitamins. I am keeping my weight and the required energy on a diet of bread, almond paste, green vegetable and tomatoes, and lemon. I take also about 2 oz. of honey daily mixed with hot water and a pinch of bicarbonate of soda. The bowels act regularly. I am worrying you with these details as you have always interested yourself in my health. I have not received a copy of your address on "How to prolong the span of life in India" and "Health and disease in relation to childhood."[2]

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 5-4-1932

273. LETTER TO PADMA

March 22, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I got your letter. I read the poem. I see that you have a gift for poetry. But don't be impatient. Your gifts will develop only if your health improves. Do you get any medical help there? Did you go to Bhowali? The very air of that place is as good as medicine. How is it that you still don't improve? I received only one letter from Sarojinidevi and replied to her. I have decided to experiment on the Magan spinning-wheel and asked them to send me one.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6130. Also C.W. 3482. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

[1] *The Antiquity of Hindu Medicine*

[2] This sentence is from *The Hindu,* 29-4-1932.

274. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

March 22, 1932

BHAI VITHALDAS,

Presuming that you have returned to Bombay now, I am writing this to your address there. I got the dates you sent for the second time. They contain numerous caterpillars and weevils, which perhaps may have bred after the parcel reached here. In any case, however, you should not send more dates until I ask for them. The dates supplied here are not bad but, for some time, I wish to see if I cannot do without dates altogether. It is not possible here to preserve in good condition a large stock of any eatables. Moreover, friends outside should not spend either time or money on those in jail unless necessary. When I need [anything] I will certainly ask [for it]. I hope your health is daily improving. Sardar and Mahadev are quite well.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VITHALDAS JERAJANI
KHADI BHANDAR
KALBADEVI ROAD
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9780

275. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

March 22, 1932

A devotee of the *Gita* never concerns himself with the question whether he can see God while in this body, for it is his duty to do work but he has no right to claim the fruit. If so, why should we think about that to which we have no right? All the same, it is my view that full realization of God is impossible while in this body. We may almost reach the goal, but, because of the body, it seems impossible that we can go through the doorway. We must, of course, feel continually the misery of separation from God, otherwise we would give up or relax our effort. Such

misery, however, should lead not to despair but to hope, not to relaxation of effort but to even greater effort. We have God's assurance that however small the effort, it is never wasted. In view of this, even the misery of separation should be a cause of joy to us, for we must have faith that one day we shall realize Him.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 30-1

276. *LETTER TO A PENSIONER*[1]

March 22, 1932

You should write to Dr. Muthu. My own knowledge, which, though not scientific, but based on experience suggests that you should fast for three days and break the fast with milk and orange juice. If you try this, it will help you.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 30

277. *LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR*

March 23, 1932

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR,

Many thanks for Mr. Stokes's book[2]. Please tell Mr. Stokes that I have set aside other reading in order to go through his book. I hope, when I have finished it, to write to him directly.

I hope that fever has not been troubling you again and that you have been otherwise too keeping well and fit.

As the right hand again causes trouble, I am using the left hand for writing. I have now Mahadev's assistance.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Jayakar's Private Papers, Correspondence File No. 407-VI. Courtesy: National Archives of India

[1] The addressee had asked for a nature cure treatment for his asthma.
[2] *Satyakama or "True Desires"*

278. A LETTER

March 24, 1932

MY DEAR,

In working out plans for self-restraint, attention must not for a single moment be withdrawn from the fact that we are all sparks of the divine and, therefore, partake of its nature, and since there can be no such thing as self-indulgence with the divine it must of necessity be foreign to human nature. If we get a hard grasp of that elementary fact, we should have no difficulty in attaining self-control, and that is exactly [what] we sing every evening. You will recall that one of the verses says that the craving for self-indulgence abates only when one sees God face to face.

Love.

BAPU

C.W. 8961. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

279. LETTER TO ABBAS

March 24, 1932

CHI. ABBAS,

Your question is very good. "Which does not cause pain to anybody"[1] means that the speaker should sincerely have no intention of causing pain. We can never know with certainty what the effect on the other person will be. We may, therefore, only think how we would feel if somebody said the same thing to us. The same rule applies about "agreeable" and "beneficial".

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6307. Also C.W. 8988. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Anudvegakaram*; *Bhagavad Gita*, XVII. 15

280. LETTER TO JUGATRAM DAVE

March 24, 1932

BHAI,

You have filled up pages all right. Our gharry is not driven by human beings. It is driven by God. It will certainly continue to run as long as we, the passengers, have faith in Him. The moment we lose faith, be sure that the train will stop.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8983. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 34

281. LETTER TO INDU N. PAREKH

March 24, 1932

CHI.,

Yours is an interesting question.

The *Mahabharata* is a poem and not history. The poet's aim in it is to show that, if man adopts the path of violence, he will necessarily have to resort to falsehood. Even a person like Krishna cannot escape that necessity. But a wrong is a wrong no matter who does it. The actions of keeping Shikhandi in front and hiding the sun were certainly blameworthy. If I remember correctly, Vyasji also has represented them in that light.

If the plays which represent such incidents show that they are not worthy of imitation, there may be no harm in staging them. However, the question you have asked is certainly worth pondering over. . . .[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8985. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 34

[1] Omission as in the source

282. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

March 24, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

You have filled your letter entirely with explanations, but you can do that only once. You can come whenever you wish to.

All three of us are in good health and keep cheerful.

Janakibehn is all right now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1832

283. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

March 24, 1932

CUNNING RAIHANA,

You are trying to delude me by praising my Urdu. By God's grace, however, I will not let myself be deluded in this way. My handwriting is very bad, and so is my spelling. Before my Urdu deserves such praise, Raihana will have grown into an old woman or I would have to give more time to it [than I do]. I now copy the *bhajan*. Imagine that Raihana is singing it.[1]

Arise, awake, O Traveller, it's morning now.
Where is the night that you are still in bed?
He gains who stands awake,
And he who slumbers loses.
Open your eyes a little,
You careless one, turn your mind to God.
This is not the way to love,
That while He is awake, you slumber.
Know that you will have to eat the fruits of your doings,
O sinner, how can sin ever bring happiness?
You carry a burden of sin on your head,
Why, then, hold your head in grief and weep?

[1] In the source, this paragraph and the song which follows are in Urdu.

What you would tomorrow, do today,
And what you would today, do right now.
After the sparrows have ravaged your crops,
What will it avail you to beat your breast and weep?

I see that the handwriting continues to be bad, but I can't write better with the left hand. I will try and improve it slowly. Meanwhile, endure it as it is. Please do not feel ashamed of such a dull pupil. If you are patient, I may in course of time deserve your praise, which I do not deserve now. If that does not happen, I will blame you. Isn't there a book which explains how to spell in Urdu? Please inquire. If Hamid Ali and Sharifabehn are still there, convey to them my many *salaams* and tell them that I have not forgotten the meeting with them at Godhra and the help given by both at the Social Reform Conference.

Tell Father that I got his postcard. However, it would not be proper for a prisoner like me to write often to a big person like him. I can write as many letters as I choose to girls like you. Father may write to me as often as he wishes. There is certainly some justification for such a rule. There might be no harm in a prisoner receiving letters, but there may be in his writing. Hence a prisoner may write innocent letters to children without objection. It should cause no surprise that Father's memory is getting weak. It should be enough for us if God preserves long his strength to dance [with joy]. To Father and Mother, many *salaams* and as many *vandemataramss* from us all. Kisses to Kamalmiyan[1]. Blessings to Hamida, Rohini, and others. It is a very good thing that Ba has now returned to them. Send me from your treasury some good *bhajans* of your choice. If you write in Urdu script, it will serve as a lesson in Urdu for me. Ask Pashabhai to write. Blessings to him from Sardar and me. Let Sardar remain for ever only Vallabhkaka for you.

Long live Raihana! *Khuda Hafiz.*

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9639

[1] Sohaila's son

284. *LETTER TO SOMABHAI PATEL*

March 24, 1932

CHI. SOMABHAI,

Never mind if Narandas has made a prisoner of you. Improve your health. Narrate your experiences to me. How did you spend the time? Is there any news about Bhansali? How much weight did you lose?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9220

285. *LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL*

March 24, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

This time your handwriting seems to have deteriorated. You should see that it is always good. Ordinarily it is not necessary to make any difference between men's and women's work. There is a difference in some respects, but it will come about naturally.

The correct name is "Mahadevbhai" and not "Madhavbhai".

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9423. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

286. *LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER*

March 25, 1932

MY DEAR HORACE,

You will have no difficulty in recognizing this handwriting. Mahadev was just sent to me when I had again to fall back on the left hand. I was glad to have your note. Agatha has been keeping me informed to the extent that she can of your activities and the papers that I am allowed to receive do also now and

then mention something of the activities of all the many friends who had interested themselves in this struggle and Hoyland has been telling me of the silent prayers. I know that they are all precious and not one prayer of the heart is without an adequate response. What though one does not see tangible results of all heartfelt prayers!

You are quite right in being happy for me to have this enforced rest. If it had not come to me there would have been in all probability a breakdown. The time here does not hang heavy. There is the spinning-wheel, and there are the silent companions—the books—and I need some time for doing a little writing. And then I have Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel with me who last time was not kept with me but just a wall separated him from me. And now I have Mahadev.

Yes, I wanted that special message from Olive[1]. I was sorry that I could not come in closer touch with her during those precious days at Selly Oak, but I have imagination enough to understand what her beautiful life must be like. Our love to you and Olive and all the friends.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1412

287. *LETTER TO ANANDI ASAR*[2]

March 25, 1932

CHI.,

It was bad of you to have given a curt reply to the visitor. We should always be courteous to any visitor, no matter how he is dressed, and we must reply to a visitor's question.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8984. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Addressee's wife

[2] Addressee's name is inferred from "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 24/29-3-1932.

288. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

March 25, 1932

CHI. MANU,

Your description is good, but how about your handwriting which is very bad? How old are you now? Your handwriting must improve.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7424. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

289. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI M. PATEL

March 25, 1932

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I got your letter. This time we are really being tested. We should not mind it. Write to me from time to time.

I suppose you know that Mahadev has been brought here. We three are practically enjoying ourselves.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8994

290. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 26, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

No letter from you as you had promised. But I am not surprised. Such correspondence was held up. But the bar is now lifted at least so far as I am concerned and there[illegible] sumably so far as my correspondents are concerned. expect from you an answer almost per return. Tell and your companions are doing, what you are eati you are passing the days.

Mahadev has now joined us and we have become a merry company. He is the most industrious spinner among us. My weak arms won't let me try to outdo him. My milkless diet continues without practically any change in the menu. I think I did tell you about the addition of bread. As yet it seems to have done no harm. My weight fluctuates between 105½ and 106½. This is not bad. The others are also doing quite well.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6216. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9682

291. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 26, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Just as I was sending the enclosed[1], I got your two precious letters. I therefore suspended the despatch for writing this. You now know why I could not write, but then we are prisoners. We may not expect the regularity that independent people can create for themselves. But there is nothing to grumble at in these delays which must be regarded as inevitable. Henceforth, let us hope, things will move on without interruption. But whenever the unexpected hitch of any kind occurs, do not be anxious, but say, 'We are prisoners'.

I am glad you have put on weight. For your height and breadth, you can easily carry 132 lb. But the heat is bad. It is good to have dropped salt. You might even drop milk and butter for two or three days and you will feel cool.

I am glad you are growing fond of reading. Get someone to procure for you full translation of *Ramayana* by Griffiths and the translation of eleven principal Upanishads. This will be enough for the present term.

For Hindi, you should procure *Bala Ramayana*. As you now know the story, you will have no difficulty in following it in Hindi.

I had copy of Lord Irwin's letter[2] before too.

I too have no news of Rolland. But I do not worry. Such interruptions are a legitimate part of the business.

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] "I think Bapu was referring to a letter Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax) had written to me."—Mirabehn

I must stop for the day as I am anxious for this letter to leave here today.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6217. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9683

292. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

March 26, 1932

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

What is your wish regarding the bamboo charkha? I need not see the model. I should like to see models which would help us to increase the output. If this model is strong and good otherwise, people will use it because of its low cost. Do you think it necessary that it should be used in the Ashram? I cannot judge about that from here.

Let me know what the condition of your nose is.

If Sharda does not have massage or take sun-bath, is it because she dislikes them or is it through lethargy?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 12

293. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

March 26, 1932

CHI. DEVDAS,

I received today permission to write to fellow-prisoners, and hence this letter. I think of you every day. Mahadev has been brought here. All three of us are well. More after I hear from you in reply to this. Give me news about your health, your reading and your companions. I write to Lakshmi regularly and receive her letters written in beautiful Hindi.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2022

294. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

March 26, 1932

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I received today permission to write to you and other co-workers in prison.

Write to me immediately and give me detailed information about your health and your diet. All of us feel a little worried about you. Who else are with you in prison? How is their health? How is Dr. Sumant[1]? Sardar tells me that like me Diwan Master also has lost his teeth. How is his general health? I don't know who else are with you. Gangabehn[2] has informed me that Pannalal[3] is one of them.

My *vandemataram* to all co-workers. You must have heard that Mahadev has joined us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2896

295. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

March 26, 1932

CHI. MANI,

Today I received permission to write to fellow-prisoners. Hence this letter. As I have got this permission, I take it that the recipients of my letters will be allowed to reply to me. Reply to this letter at once. I do not write today to other women prisoners, namely, Lilavati[4], Nandubehn[5] and Mridula[6]. So let me have news of them too. Who else are with you?

[1] Sumant Mehta
[2] Gangabehn Jhaveri
[3] Pannalal Jhaveri, Gangabehn's step-son
[4] Wife of Harilal Desai
[5] Nandubehn Kanuga
[6] Mridula Sarabhai

Mahadev has been brought here. We three are all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. MANIBEHN PATEL
PRISONER
PRISON, BELGAUM

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 80

296. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

March 26, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

Your elder brother's weight has increased and the leg has improved so much that he can walk now. There is not the slightest cause for worry. If brother and sister are of the same age, the sister can ask the brother and learn things from him. It is a sister's duty to do what will be for the brother's good, regardless of their age.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9468

297. SOME REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION[1]

March 28, 1932

John Ruskin was a great writer, teacher and religious thinker. He died about 1880.[2] I suppose most inmates of the Ashram know that one book[3] of his had a great effect on me and that it was this book which inspired me to introduce an important change in my life practically on the instant. He started in 1871 writing monthly letters addressed to factory workers. I had read praise of these letters in some article of Tolstoy, but I had not been able to secure them till now. I had brought with me [from England] a book about Ruskin's work and his efforts in the field of constructive activities. I read it here. This book also mentioned the

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", pp. 248-51.
[2] He died in 1900.
[3] *Unto This Last*

letters referred to above. So I wrote to a woman disciple of Ruskin in England, who was none else but the author of that book. Being a poor woman, she could not send me the volumes of these letters. Through foolishness or false courtesy, I had not asked her to write to the Ashram for the money. This good woman sent my letter to a friend of hers who was comparatively in better circumstances. This friend was the editor of *The Spectator*. I had even met him while in England. He sent me the four volumes in which these letters had been published. I have been reading the first part. The thoughts expressed in these letters are beautiful and resemble some of our own ideas, so much so that an outsider would think that the ideas which I have set forth in my writings and which we try to put into practice in the Ashram, I had stolen from these letters of Ruskin. I hope readers will understand what is meant by 'stolen'. If an idea or ideal of life is borrowed from somebody but is presented as one's own conception, it is said to be stolen.

Ruskin has discussed many matters. Here I will mention only a few of his ideas. He says that it is a sheer error to suppose, as is generally done, that some education however little or however faulty is better than no literary education at all. It is his view that we should strive for real education alone. And then he says that every human being requires three things and three virtues. Anyone who fails to cultivate them does not know the secret of life. These six things should therefore form the basis of education. Every child, whether boy or girl, should learn the properties of pure air, clean water and clean earth, and should also learn how to keep air, water and earth pure or clean and know their benefits. Likewise, he has mentioned gratitude, hope and charity as the three virtues. Anybody who does not love truth and cannot recognize goodness or beauty lives in his own self-conceit and remains ignorant of spiritual joy. Similarly, he who has no hope, who has, in other words, no faith in divine justice, will never be cheerful in heart. And he who is without love, that is, lacks the spirit of ahimsa, who cannot look upon all living things as his kith and kin, will never know the secret of living.

Ruskin has explained these ideas at great length in his wonderful language. I hope I shall be able to write about them some time in a language which all the inmates of the Ashram can understand. Today I rest content with the brief precis given above. But I will say one thing, that what Ruskin has explained in his finished and cultivated prose with English readers in view,

is practically the same ideas which we discuss in our rustic language and which we have been trying to put into practice. I am comparing here not two languages, but two writers. I cannot hope to equal Ruskin's mastery of language. But a time will certainly come when the love of our language will have become universal and we shall have writers like Ruskin who will have dedicated themselves heart and soul to it and will write as powerful Gujarati as the English of Ruskin.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

298. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 28, 1932

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I was wondering why there was no letter from you. Narandas kept me informed. Now I am glad I have your letter. It was very good of Dr. Sharma to treat you without making any charge. You may send such books of his as he may recommend. The question of deciding the place for you is a little difficult. You must go to hill or to a sea-side place. I think you can go to Porbandar or Sasavne. I cannot think of another place just now. You must not lose your gain by any false step. If any of your people are living in Mussoorie you need not hesitate to go there. I agree with Narandas that you should not live at the Ashram during these hot days.

Of course you can come and see me whenever you wish. Sardar Vallabhbhai and Mahadev are with me.

As my right hand causes a little trouble if I write with it, I have been using the left hand.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 238

299. LETTER TO H. W. EMERSON

March 28, 1932

DEAR MR. EMERSON,

I was distressed to read a note by the Director of Information, Bombay, that the Bombay Government intended to sell out beyond recall the lands of 'recalcitrant' farmers of Ras and such other villages. I do not know that you can recall the remark made by Lord Irwin last year, in the course of the conversations, that under a recurrence of the circumstances which had actuated the Government to sell out some holdings in Ras during the previous satyagraha campaign, the experiment must not be repeated. I do not suggest that this remark was anything more than the then personal wish of Lord Irwin. But I cannot help feeling hurt that all such generous wishes of an honourable and high functionary should be in danger of being set aside or overlooked. And even apart from Lord Irwin's *obiter* statement, I would like the legacies of bitternesses to be left either by Government officials or Congressmen to be reduced to a minimum, if they cannot be avoided altogether. Surely all irrevocable acts which parties might possibly deplore in future or for which posterity may curse us should be avoided.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Home Department, Political, File No. 14/17, 1932, p. 7. Courtesy: National Archives of India

300. LETTER TO TILAKAM

March 28, 1932

Vanity is emptiness: Self-respect is substance. No one's self-respect is ever hurt except by self, vanity is always hurt from outside.

In the phrase 'Seeing God face to face', 'face to face' is not to be taken literally. It is a matter of decided feeling. God is formless. He can, therefore, only be seen by spiritual sight—vision.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 52

301. A LETTER

March 28, 1932

BHAI,

In order to strengthen your mind, you should firmly adhere to the resolutions for the day which you make every morning. After some time, you can make resolutions for a week and so gradually for your whole life. You should not let a single worthless thought arise in your mind. This is the reason for the great importance of Ramanama. It is a *tamboora*, and other good thoughts are like the other instruments or like the music. The tune on the *tamboora* must go on ceaselessly. For good health, freedom from worry is essential. In your case, I am sure that your health will improve if your mental illness is cured. But we should certainly employ remedies for the body too.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8987. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

302. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

March 28, 1932

CHI. MANGALA (DARLING),

Arithmetic is an intellectual subject and similarly the meanings of the *Gita* verses, history, geography, etc., also are such subjects. Any subject to understand which we have to labour with our mind is an intellectual subject. Memorizing the *Gita* is not an intellectual subject. Spinning can be an intellectual subject. Anybody who, while spinning, improves the method of spinning or finds out ways of improving the construction of the spinning-wheel will have exercised his intellect.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4080. Also C.W. 44. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

303. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

March 28, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

You may ask any questions you like. You will not probably get such an opportunity again. You don't know that I can, if I choose, reply a question in just one line or may fill pages. If I cannot write a long letter, I shall be content with a short reply. The reply, however, will not be incomplete.[1]

To believe that your tongue had an effect on my right hand is like believing that, because the branch of a tree fell as soon as a crow came and sat on it, it fell because of the crow's weight.

I do get dreams, but the mind hardly ever takes note of them. I attach no importance to dreams.

I think there are complete sets of Carlyle's and Ruskin's works in our library. If we have them send me a list of the volumes.

How many copies of the consolidated list of books do we have? If we have more than one copy send one to me.

I have never written to you about the grown up women. I feel inclined to do so this time. They do not seem to come together for any common purpose. That is, their Association has broken up. I have written to Lakshmibehn and Durga on this matter, but I seem to have produced no effect on them. The women should get the strength to assume responsibility for joint work. If you have sufficient courage and confidence in yourself, take up this task. If you do so, however, you must resolve not to be defeated. We have, in fact, achieved nothing if we are able to do something when all the circumstances are favourable. A carpenter gives shape to any piece of wood and a sculptor makes an image from any stone; we are, likewise, worth our salt only if we know how to live with all types of people and get work from them. I think this is the main thing we have to learn in this life. For that, our heart should be as large as the sea. If we observe the defects of a person the very moment we see him or her and are deterred by them, our work would suffer. Everyone has defects. We have them and so have others. If we are determined to mix with them despite the defects, only then can we succeed in our work.

[1] The addressee had then been receiving from Gandhiji letters written with his left hand.

I know that this is a difficult task. I have been engaged in this one task all these years and yet I cannot say that I have succeeded in it. I do seem, though, to have succeeded in some measure. That is why I muster courage or have the presumption to guide others.

You may now do what you think proper. You can, if you wish, put this letter before the women.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10278. Also C.W. 6726. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

304. LETTER TO VIMALABEHN A. PATEL

March 28, 1932

CHI. VIMALA,

Narasinhbhai[1] had prepared me for your letter and the books. Perhaps you know that I was able to see him. He was in good health and quite cheerful. He is now kept with other prisoners. I will find time to read the books which you have sent. I hope your work is going on very well.

Vandemataram to Mother from both of us, and blessings to you.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3275

305. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

March 28, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

A girl of your age should have these things: a fine body, a strong mind and occupations for both, which include all the processes relating to spinning, cooking, various games, swimming, music, knowledge of Gujarati, Hindi and Sanskrit, elements of arithmetic, history, geography, some knowledge of the *Gita* and the ability to recognize stars and trees and plants. If you lack any of these things, that will be a deficiency. I forgot to mention the art of writing a good hand.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] Addressee's father

[PS.]

How is it that Mohan[1] has fever? Has he been examined by a doctor?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5770. Also C.W. 2993. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

306. A LETTER

March 28, 1932

As the leaves of a tree always live together, so do men with similar ideas and ways. Their attraction for one another is natural.

The number of one's co-workers may be a million, but there can be only one friend, and that is God. It is my view, and my experience, that other friendships are an obstacle in the way of friendship with God.

I do not know, and do not believe, that Lord Krishna could go from one place to another, without any physical means, through yogic power or some other power. A real yogi shuns the exercise of any supernatural power, for his yoga is exclusively for self-realization. Would he exchange it for a mess of pottage?

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 53

307. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 24/29, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your packet yesterday. Gangabehn came and saw me. It is necessary that we should think about Indu's health. When he returned from Bangalore, he weighed 100 lb., and he is 90 now. Discover the cause. Know from him where and what he eats, what he used to eat in Bangalore and what was his way of life there, and how, according to him, he can keep better health in the Ashram. If anybody does not keep good health in the Ashram, we should try and discover the cause and, if he or she does not improve with such measures and changes as we can try and as would be in keeping with the principles of the Ashram, we should send the person to some other place, to Visapur or Wardha, for instance. Think over this problem and, if you consider it necessary, entrust the responsibility in this matter to one particular

[1] Addressee's brother

person. You will not be able to look after every inmate of the Ashram. You should be burdened only with the responsibility of giving the final decision.

I take it that you got the letter[1] which I wrote last week and in which I explained about visitors, and I do not dwell further on the subject in this letter. I also wrote about Champa in that letter. There were two or three other points too.

Indu has raised a very good question in his letter. Read my reply[2] to him. However, you, Panditji, Premabehn, Chimanlal, Valji and others in the Ashram who think on such matters should ponder over the problem. Indu had asked whether Krishna did not do wrong in advising Arjuna to keep Shikhandi in front of him and kill Bhishma and in employing his Sudarshan wheel to hide the sun behind clouds, so that Jayadrath might be killed, and had raised the question whether plays which treated of such incidents should be performed in the Ashram. I was very much pleased by his question. If the general tendency of the drama is to show such actions as morally wrong, I would have no objection to its being performed. All the same, I do have some doubt about the propriety of such dramas being performed in the Ashram. I don't think we do any good by repeatedly presenting to children unworthy actions of great men, even though we represent the actions as unworthy, unless it is absolutely necessary to tell them about such actions. They will probably forget the unworthiness of the action and leave with the impression that we, too, could do what great men did. It does not, therefore, seem proper to me to select such incidents and present them in dramatic performances before children. I think that the dramas which we perform in the Ashram should be of a different type. For instance, Rabindranath's *Muktadhara*. Maithilisharan Gupta's *Anagh*, which I recently read here, is also a good play and could be performed before the children there. Its Hindi is simple and sweet and the moral is excellent.

I go and inquire after Haridas from time to time.

Do you get news about Krishnadas[3] from any source? If you do not, write to Mahavir Prasad and ask him if he has any.

Amtulbehn may certainly come and see me. Your scabies and Kanu's ought to be cured now.

About the Vidyapith library, so far as we can judge from this distance, all of us feel that we should not introduce the kind

[1] *Vide* pp. 210-1.
[2] *Vide* p. 232.
[3] Krishnadas Simharai, one time secretary to Gandhiji

of dyarchy which has been suggested. It would mean control by two authorities. Either they should hand over full control to us or should themselves exercise it properly as long as they retain it with them. However, do only what seems best to you. I shall not be able to see the women prisoners lodged in this jail, but I shall be permitted to write to them and receive letters from them.

Anandi had referred to Prema in her letter. Read my reply[1] to her. The matter requires further thought, however. In teaching the children in the Ashram to be fearless and to stand erect, we have, unknowingly, taught them rudeness. Even grown-ups are not free from such rudeness and, sometimes, their rudeness assumes a painful form. It seems that a guest had arrived in the Ashram and the boys did not answer his inquiries properly. One directed him this way and another that way, and none would even reply to his questions. And of course none took the trouble to accompany him to the office. I understand from Anandi's letter that she was somewhere near about but she felt unhappy afterwards and wrote to me about the incident, it seems, to confess her error and atone for it. She has asked me about the duty of the inmates of the Ashram in such circumstances. There is no doubt about what it is, but since the question has been raised you should draw everybody's attention to it. Explain what I have written to Anandi, filling in the necessary details. In my letter I could write only a sentence or two explaining the general principle.

Vanamala tells me in her letter that Mohan's body temperature always remains 99°. Inquire about this. If necessary, consult a doctor. Why should a child of his age continually show 99° temperature? Or, maybe, just because he is a child, on taking his temperature with a thermometer or examining his pulse, we may feel that he is having fever but in fact there may be no fever. The heart-beat of a very active child who is playing about the whole day is bound to be faster, and, therefore, he is bound to have more heat in him and the thermometer or the examination of his pulse may show a little fever. In such a case, the real test is provided by the child's stool, the appearance of his tongue, his digestion and his weight. A child's weight must show increase every weak. His tongue should be clean and moist, he should be passing stool without effort and it must be well formed and without foul smell. If all these signs are there, we need not pay any attention

[1] *Vide* p. 236.

to what the pulse or the thermometer may tell us. Every mother in the Ashram, and Jethalal too, should learn these things.

There was a letter from Amtul to which, as desired by her, I have replied at her Delhi address. Tell her this if she has arrived there. She may certainly come and see me. I agree with you that it would be better for her not to live at Sabarmati in summer. It would be very good if you can arrange for her to stay in Porbandar, Chorwad or Sasavne. If she has relations in Mussoorie, she may go there. It would also do her good if she can stay with Padma in Almora. I have given this advice in my letter to her also. Do help to accommodate her, if you can, as I have suggested.

On taking your letter in my hand, I read Pyare Ali's name in it. At the place where he lives the air may be cool, and so Amtul will perhaps feel happy there and may also be able to help Pyare Ali. Sultana[1] and other children are there, too. However, treat all this as no more than suggestions. Do what you think proper.

I and Gangabehn have started writing to each other. She informs me that all the women prisoners are keeping well.

I got the leather sent by you for repairing sandal soles.

My experiment of milkless diet is continuing. It has proceeded all right so far. I deduce from this fact that for a person leading a quiet life milk is perhaps not necessary. From the point of view of spiritual well-being, it may even be harmful. As yet, this is only an inference. I can be positive only if the experiment continues successfully for a long time. In my own case this is certainly true, that before I was attacked by dysentery in 1918 I could do without milk no matter how hard I was working. However, these speculations serve no purpose just now. All that is necessary is that I should let you know about the effects of the experiment from week to week. For the present, let nobody even think of following my example.

Blessings from
BAPU[2]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8216. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Amina Qureshi's daughter

[2] For the article "Some Reflections on Education" which followed, *vide* pp. 241-3.

308. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GI

Marc

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

As there was no letter from you this week, there w for me to write to you. But this time I ignore the Knowledge should be given only to a *jijnasu*. A *jijnas* person who hungers for knowledge. As a child fed by even when it is not hungry will fall ill, so also, if yo hungry for knowledge you will not be able to digest which is forced on you, that is, you will derive no be it. Hence, not only should I get a letter from you every the letter should also be an interesting one. "Interesti sweet, one which gave you pleasure in writing and wi pleasure in reading. If you are interested in *lejim* exercise write an interesting letter on that subject but it m interesting to me because I may know nothing about cises and have no means here of knowing anything. If such a letter, what can I write in reply? Do you underst the two conditions your letters must fulfil so that the interesting? I, too, must fulfil those conditions in my lett is why I once wrote to Sharda that, if you could take rest in my letters about the *Gita*, the fault must be be it.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. Narandas Gandhi

309. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

March

CHI. KAKA,

I am now permitted to write to all of you, and writing this. Let me know how you keep. I have Narahari and Prabhudas are with you. Write to me me about their health too. Since I have asked you to

am not writing separately to them. What have you been reading or studying?

All three of us are well. . . .[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Since I am permitted to write to you, I am sure you will be permitted to reply to me.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9485. Courtesy: D. B. Kalelkar

310. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

March 30, 1932

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

With reference to my letter[2] of the 6th instant, I have the definition of the expression 'Non-Political' which I observe corresponds to mine, but I have yet to have the reply with reference to the five illustrative names submitted of non-Ashram friends who are likely to want to visit me or who I am likely to want to see. I shall be obliged if the reply can now be given. I am waiting for that reply to prepare the list desired by the Government.

Yours sincerely,

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

311. LETTER TO DAHIBEHN PATEL

March 31, 1932

CHI. DAHIBEHN,

I got your letter. The harder the task, the fewer willing workers will there be. I was, therefore, not surprised by your letter. But understanding workers, when they observe the paucity of volunteers, will become more devoted to their work and make greater sacrifices. If they do so, the number of workers will increase again. There is no exception to this law.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9206

[1] A line and a half were censored by the jail authorities.
[2] *Vide* pp.182-3.

312. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

March 31, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

Since you have taken a pledge that you will write, you should do so regularly. That you have completed twenty-four years means nothing at all. You have a long span of life before you yet and should fulfil during it the hopes which I may have built on you. Do go and visit Pyarelal. Personally I think I am keeping very good health this time. That I have been able to maintain my weight without milk and do not require enemas is enough for me. I don't mind very much if I cannot write with the right hand. I shall get used to writing with the left hand. All three of us are doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1833

313. LETTER TO MOHAN N. PARIKH

March 31, 1932

CHI. MOHAN,

The letters you make vary in size. Improve your hand. It is a good thing that you rise early. Do you know the tables? If you do not, learn them.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9176

314. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

March 31, 1932

As I had no news from you at all, at last I wrote to Taramati. Then unexpectedly I got your letter yesterday and felt happy. I do not worry about your loss of weight. Your health should remain good in other respects. From the point of view of climate, Nasik is excellent. Write to me regularly from wherever

you may be. If writing to me comes in the way of your writing to others, ask one of those to whom you must write to convey your message to me. The understanding between the authorities here and me is that I can write to any of my fellow-prisoners. This should mean that, if the prisoner chooses to reply to me, his letter should not count among the number he is entitled to write.

. . .[1] A prisoner ought not to even think of the outside world. Karmayoga for him would mean doing the duty which now has become his in jail.

In the verse बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ[2], "seek refuge in the attitude of detachment", etc., the word *buddhi* certainly does not mean the *samkhya*, or the path of knowledge. Here it has the meaning which it bears in the phrase *yogabuddhi*, about which the Lord had promised to explain in the verse एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धियोगे त्विमां शृणु ।[3] "Thus have I set before thee the attitude of Knowledge; hear now the attitude of Action", etc. That is to say, if any comparison is to be made at all, it is between karmayoga and *bhaktiyoga*. But instead of making a comparison between *jnanayoga*, karmayoga and *bhaktiyoga*, the *Gita* aims at a synthesis of the three. To practise any one of them perfectly, one must also practise the other two. That is, the three are inseparable. There is some indication of the superiority of karmayoga from among the three, but only because there is less risk in it of being deceived. नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते।[4] "Here no effort undertaken is lost, no disaster befalls", etc. I believe that we must first grasp the general purport of the book we are trying to study. In other words, our thinking about it should be independent.

As for rebirth, there is no room for doubt at all. Our body changes a little every day, so that in seven years the whole gets changed altogether. It seems to be the same because the form remains the same. If the body can be transformed every seven years, there is no reason whatever to think that what we know as death means complete annihilation. The *atman* is different from the body and it is certainly not destroyed when the body is destroyed. Then, all that takes place at death is a change of state. If a change of state is possible, why not a change of the body? However, we can have a full discussion of this subject only when we meet. Meanwhile, I certainly wish that you should be able

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 49
[3] *Ibid*, II. 39
[4] *Ibid*, II. 40

to get rid of your doubts about certain conclusions. For this purpose, you may put me any questions that you wish.

I don't think that I can write a *smriti*. What I write or say has not been thought out in conformity with a system. I have only enough strength to enable me to meet every situation as it arises in the course of my quest for truth. That is to say, I am no Shastri, and only a person learned enough to write a Shastra can compose a *smriti*. This suggestion was first made to me by Kishorelal. I would certainly write such a treatise if I could. I would be fortunate, however, if I can use rightly whatever powers God has given me.

We three are quite well. The third is Mahadev.

[PS.]

I see nothing wrong in your trying without concern for the result to come to see me. I would be very happy if you succeed.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, pp. 105-7

315. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

YERAVDA MANDIR,
March 31, 193[*2*][1]

CHI. VANAMALA,

I hope you have completely recovered from your illness. The best subject of study for girls is how to live a pure life. As for other subjects, each may learn the subject in which she has interest. Persons of the same age are not necessarily similar in nature.

The leaves of all plants do not show as if they felt shy in our presence. I do not know why some of them do. If any of the girls among you has an aptitude for research, let her discover the reason.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5761. Also C.W. 2984. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

[1] The source has "1931", but Gandhiji was not in jail in March 1931. *Vide* also p. 247.

316. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

April 1, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

Sardar is in excellent health, though he has lost some weight. True, he had made a few changes in his food, but now he has practically returned to his normal diet. From the authorities there was no objection at all to his doing so. In the matter of food, the only restriction is what we lay down for ourselves.

The golden rule to follow in interpreting the Shastras is this: The various interpretations offered by the commentators may all be correct from their respective standpoints. The seeker should faithfully adhere to the meaning that appeals to his heart and act accordingly. It is for the Shastri to harmonize the different interpretations or to construct a system, and so on. For the person wishing to construct a way of life for himself, there is only one harmony to be achieved—between the meaning accepted by him and his daily life.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 224. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

317. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

April 2, 1932

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

There is no particular trouble in my hand. I am not using the right hand for writing merely as a measure of precaution. You must not let your weight increase. Fast for a few days or live only on fruit. All this weight is superfluous. It may help you even if you live for some time on buttermilk.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7425. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

318. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

April 2, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

All of you seem to believe that swaraj means my rule. It will not be swaraj then. In swaraj, people who are known for their wisdom will rule. What they decide will be done. Let us hope motor-cars will count for less than they do today.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadev is quite well. The pain in his leg is much less. He eats the same things and of the same quality as at home, namely, *rotli*, dal, rice, vegetables, etc. There is not the slightest cause for worry.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9469

319. LETTER TO PURATAN BUCH

April 2, 1932

CHI. PURATAN,

Since in any case you are obliged to take rest for some time, can you not go to either Almora, Deolali, Matheran or Belgaum, or to a place on the sea-coast like Chorwad, Mangarol, Dumas, Ghogha, etc.?

I used to pray [as a child] because the elders in the family did. After earnest introspection in 1893 in South Africa, I became a conscious believer.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9165

320. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

April 3, 1932

CHI. MANGALA (DARLING),

You should know personally the men and women among whom you live. You should know the names and properties of all the trees and varieties of grass which you grow there. You should know where the Chandrabhaga[1] has its source. You should also know the names of the insects, birds and other animals which you see there, and give names to such of them as have no names. You should know the good and the bad points of the soil there, and also the history of the buildings in the neighbourhood. Is not this enough? How much of all this do you know?

Our capacity for observation can be increased by forming the habit of carefully examining things.

I learn to study the firmament with the help of a book.

If it is getting late, you may write less, but write it carefully and slowly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4081. Also C.W. 45. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

321. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 3, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Generally I get your letters on Wednesday immediately on arrival. This time, too, I have received a beautiful question from Indu: "Can we practise sword and dagger exercises in the Ashram?"[2] I don't know or remember when swords and daggers were introduced in the Ashram. Nor do I remember whether, if they were introduced when I was there, I had been consulted. Whether or not I was, I now think that these things have

[1] A rivulet near the Ashram, now dried up

[2] For his previous question, *vide* p. 232.

no place in the Ashram. All of you should sit together and think over this matter and, if you feel that their introduction cannot be defended in any way, get rid of them immediately. It seems to me that keeping lathis is the utmost limit to which we can go. However, you and other responsible inmates of the Ashram should think independently over this matter and discuss it among yourselves. If there are any other issues besides this, small or big, you should think over them too.

The other problem is about illness. Anybody who falls ill, as Indu did, as soon as he or she comes to live in the Ashram, should be sent away to some other place. For instance, Jamna[1] has returned there after gaining 12 lb. of weight. If she were to lose it all now, I would certainly feel very unhappy. If a person keeps better health at some other place than he does in the Ashram, it would be good both for him and for the Ashram to send him to stay at that place. We should try and discover the deficiencies of the Ashram because of which some persons do not keep good health there. The water there is of course one cause, but there may be other factors too. These are air and food. We should find out if we are polluting the air in any way. For this, we should examine whether the arrangements for the disposal of night soil and the excreta of cattle are satisfactory. If Anandi is always ill, she should be sent somewhere. Sharda told me that if I did not object, Velanbehn would send Anandi to live with her at Matheran. Really speaking, my permission is not required at all. It is for you to decide whether or not she should be permitted to go. Personally, I see no objection to the suggestion. At present, her expenses even in Deolali are borne by us. If, therefore, Anandi can be sent to live with Sharda, that should certainly be done. This solves the problem about only one of them. I have asked you to think about the problem of all who keep bad health in the Ashram.

Tell Valji that I have carefully preserved the translation of *Vratavichar*[2] and that, if possible, I will even return it. I feel now that I shall be able to do so.

I understand what you say about Champa. Please remember that it is your responsibility to look after her.

You must have inferred from what I wrote above about Anandi that Harjivan[3] and Sharda[4] came and saw me. If you can

[1] Presumably, the addressee's wife who had gone to Bombay for health reasons

[2] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 41.

[3]&[4] The Kotaks, khadi workers

ascertain how Lakshmi, Lilavati and others are doing, please write to me about them.

I got the leather for repairing the soles and the books. The difficulty which the officials feel in permitting me to see the women prisoners lodged here is that they would have to be brought to the men's jail. And I cannot certainly be taken to *the women's jail.* Since this difficulty appeared genuine to me, I did not insist. It was agreed, therefore, that we should be permitted to correspond. I have already started writing. Gangabehn informs me that all are well in the Ashram.

Continue the treatment till your scabie disappears completely. It will benefit you in other ways too.

Is the Ashram bulletin being issued? If it is, is a copy sent to me every time? I have not seen any along with your letters for some weeks past.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I got today Prabhavati's letter. She is in the Lucknow Central Jail. Kanta also is there. She has been promoted to 'A' class. Prabhavati has been demoted to 'B'. According to me Prabhavati has been promoted and Kanta demoted. Prabhavati seems to be keeping good health. She tells me that Jayaprakash is in Bombay. For this week, Mahadev has sketched a fine word-picture[1] which I send with this letter.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8217. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

322. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 3, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter.

Indu has put me some fine questions. Why should we do in the Ashram exercises with swords, *jamaiya*[2], etc.? I have discussed this question in my letter[3] to Narandas. Hence I do not say anything about it here. I have mentioned the question only

[1] An account of Duchess Elizabeth under the title "A Saintly Woman of Russia" from Sir Samuel Hoare's *Fourth Seal,* published in *Ashram Jivan*

[2] Dagger

[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

to ask you whether it has also occurred to you, since you have been yourself learning these exercises.

I would not give to the Ashram the certificate which you do. I would certainly be happy if it really deserved such a certificate. You may have formed the impression that any person in the Ashram who takes up some work becomes wholly absorbed in it, but your impression is not correct. Are we able to observe the Ashram vows faithfully? It had been decided to teach Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit in the Ashram, but we made only a half-hearted effort. Have we acquired proficiency in tanning? Do we spin fine yarn of the highest count? I can point to many such deficiencies, but what I have said is enough to justify my questioning [your certificate].

Everyone can pay single-minded attention to lathi exercises. But we can say likewise that everyone runs after sweets. There are indeed many things in the world the pursuit of which requires no strenuous effort. Since we are also animals in our nature, this quality [of pursuing a thing with single-minded attention] is instinctive in us. It does not have to be cultivated. The question is whether or not [in a particular case] it deserves to be cultivated. Every property of animal nature need not of course be regarded as something to be shunned.

How many persons take meals in the common kitchen these days? Do you still make bread in the Ashram? If yes, who is in charge of the work? If you make good bread, send a loaf or two with any person who may come to see me.

If anyone from the Ashram meets Lakshmi, he or she should tell her that I do not remember not having replied to any letter from her. She should, therefore, write to me.

Dikshit's *Jyotishshastra*[1] has been translated into Gujarati. I have got a copy of the translation with me. Ball's work will be available to me here, and so I don't want you to send a copy from there. The books sent by Upton Sinclair belong to the Ashram. Enter them in the catalogue and send me *Boston* and *Brass Tacks*. Send a list of the rest.

I like the Upanishads. But I don't consider myself fit to write a commentary on them.

You should know my love of jesting. I can tell you only in jest that you ask me to describe your faults so that I may praise you[2]. There is, of course, this truth in my remark, that if a

[1] A Marathi work on astronomy

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Premabehn Kantak", pp. 224-6.

person asks another who loves him or her to criticize him or her, he or she will hear only praise, for love covers defects as with a veil, or sees them as virtues. It is the nature of love that it prompts one to point out on occasion the defects of the beloved one because one wants to see perfection in the person whom one loves. Did Kisan tell you that I was praising you even when I described you as hysterical before Dhurandhar? For, in that context you would have had to be held guilty of a more serious offence if I did not believe that you were hysterical. You certainly are hysterical. Sometimes you almost become mad; what does that signify? Anyone who gives way to an emotional outburst is hysterical. Do you understand what I mean?

I have always felt that Japan's policy is regrettable. She certainly deserved the victory over Russia but that does not make her policy worthy of emulation by others. Just now, however, it will be enough if we take care of our own policy. There is the Holy Being eternally awake with a million eyes to watch Japan's policy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10279. Also C.W. 6727. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

323. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Sunday, April 3, [1932][1]

DEAR SISTERS,

Since I cannot write with the left hand as fast as I can with the right, I dictate this letter instead of writing it.

'Whatever women do, how can you, being their elder, employ satyagraha against them?' There is a big flaw in this argument and it is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of satyagraha. In that question, you equate satyagraha with *duragraha*[2]. Satyagraha makes no distinction between the young and the old, the prince and the pauper. God also employs satyagraha against us. His satyagraha is unceasing. In essence, satyagraha means simply this—scrupulous regard for truth. If God did not adhere to truth, the whole world would perish in an instant. The point is that offering satyagraha is as much a duty as it is

[1] A part of this letter is given in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 72, under the date April 4, 1932.

[2] Opposite of satyagraha

a privilege. But I shall now take your own instance. If you do not discuss my letters among yourselves and reply to them, I really need not write to you every week. Even if I write, my letters will have no value and no effect. A lover of truth never writes or speaks merely for the sake of writing or speaking. There must be some definite purpose in his writing or speaking. Ordinarily he should observe complete silence. Really speaking, there can be nothing for me to tell you or anybody else, particularly while I am in prison. Though I am imprisoned, the Government permits me to maintain limited contact with the outside world, and I avail myself of that freedom. But I should do so only for writing letters with a definite aim. A person like me should teach what he wishes to teach only through his own conduct. Those who do not learn from my actions, how can they learn from my words? This is the general rule. But there are persons in the Ashram as also outside it who regard my manner of life as worth following and, for that very reason, want me to explain my ideas more clearly. It is my duty to write to them. You are included among these persons, but only if you ask me some questions. That is why I told you that, if you do not reply to me, ask me no question or discuss nothing with me, why should I write to you?

I know that you feel shy. I also know your nature. You do what service you can and say nothing. That is perfectly right, and it befits you. But even though we should learn to live in that manner, after all we have to mix with one another. Living in the Ashram means that we should live as a small community, that is, live together, have our meals together, work and spend our free time together and think together. This is the meaning of the *mantra* which we recite before commencing every meal. Animals also have some capacity for living and moving together. But man has it in unlimited measure, and it must be so because it is his dharma to realize his oneness with all living creatures. He cannot do this if he cannot live in a community. You must, therefore, strive your best and cultivate this capacity. Hence even if you do not meet regularly just now as members of an association, you should do so at least to qualify yourselves to get weekly letters from me and to reply to them. In this manner you can make some progress [towards collective living]. When any of you write to me individually, I do reply to her. But since I started the practice of writing a common letter to the women I have realized that I must write regularly something meant for all the women. The women should discuss it and I should discuss

the questions which they raise. I think that I have now made quite clear what I wished to tell you and what I want from you.

This was only a preface to the letter. Trivenibehn has asked me one question which concerns all women. Today, therefore, I will discuss that. She asks why women, not only the women in the Ashram but all women with whom she has come in contact, look as if they were dead and have no spirit in them at all. There is some truth in her description, though of course it will not apply to all women. The reasons which I have been able to discover are these: (1) lack of order in women's life; (2) excessive worries; (3) wrong upbringing; (4) adoption of unscientific measures at the time of child-birth and during confinement; (5) lack of exercise; (6) eating food which is harmful to health; (7) the habit of remaining within the four walls of the home; (8) the habit of eating things which they ought not to eat; (9) in many cases, harmful thoughts which they do not try to regulate wisely, but repress.

These are the reasons which I can think of. I do not mean that all of them apply in every case. Every woman should think and find out which reason applies in her own case. I have observed one great defect in our women, namely, that they hide their thoughts from the world. As a result, their behaviour becomes hypocritical. This can happen only to those who are habitually hypocritical. I do not know anything in the world so poisonous as hypocrisy, and especially when the evil affects our middle class women who are suppressed throughout their lives it eats them up like a canker. At every step they do things which they dislike in their hearts, and believe that they must do them. If they only think a little, they will realize that they need not let themselves be suppressed by anybody in the world. If they learn this first lesson and cultivate the courage to stand before the world just as they are, they will be able to eliminate the other causes which I have mentioned.

According to me, this is a very important letter. Think over it again and again and ask me about anything in it which you do not understand. If you read the letter twice or thrice, you will be able to understand it very clearly.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

324. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

April 3, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

This time your handwriting was a little better. Keep on improving it.

About spinning, read the letter which I have written to Kanta.

If a Sardar does not order about others, how could he be called Sardar?

Having taken the part of Mother India in the dramatic piece, you should now cultivate the virtues befitting her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3985. Also C.W. 31. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

325. LETTER TO KISAN

April 3, 1932

CHI. KISAN,

Do you wish me to address you as Krishnakumari? Your letter was very much to my liking. It is good that you have taught exercises to Jamnabehn and others.

I believe you must have recovered by now.

Anyway do write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9068

326. LETTER TO AN AMERICAN[1]

April 4, 1932

I thank you for your letter. My answer to your first question is that I would not like anybody to get me out, and certainly not on any condition. I cannot give up, for any consideration whatsoever, what I regard as my life's mission.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 54-5

327. LETTER TO AN AMERICAN[2]

April 4, 1932

I have met many Christian Science friends. Some of these have sent me Mrs. Eddy's works. I was never able to read them through. I did however glance through them. They did not produce the impression the friends who sent them to me had expected. I have learnt from childhood, and experience has confirmed the soundness of the teaching, that spiritual gifts should not be used for the purpose of healing bodily ailments. I do however believe in abstention from use of drugs and the like. But this is purely on physical, hygienic grounds. I do also believe in utter reliance upon God, but then not in the hope that He will heal me, but in order to submit entirely to His will, and to share the fate of millions who even though they wished to, can have no scientific medical help. I am sorry to say, however, that I am not always able to carry out my belief into practice. It is my constant endeavour to do so. But I find it very difficult, being in the midst of temptation, to enforce my belief in full.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 71-2

[1] According to Mahadev Desai, the letter was in reply to the addressee's offer "to obtain his (Gandhiji's) release on condition that he devoted himself entirely to propagating the teaching of Christ".

[2] The addressee, formerly an atheist and now a follower of Christian Science, had asked for Gandhiji's views on the subject.

328. LETTER TO SURENDRA

April 4, 1932

I did get your letter in which you wrote about *brahmacharya*. We shall certainly discuss the subject when we meet. The views which I had expressed at Imam Saheb's place have become stronger and are becoming stronger still. That is, I find their truth being proved by experience. That alone is true *brahmacharya* which remains inviolate at all times and in all conditions. It is extremely difficult to cultivate such a state. But that should not be surprising. We owe our birth to lust, and love our body which is the fruit of lust. It cannot but be difficult to get rid of this heritage of lust. However, when we realize that the body is the abode of the priceless *atman*, our *brahmacharya* would remain inviolate even if Rambha came down from heaven and embraced us. To everybody, his mother is as beautiful as Rambha, and the thought of this Mother Rambha banishes impure thoughts from his mind. In like manner, the thought of any woman should banish impure thoughts from one's mind. Need I go on? Reflect over this again and again and understand all its implications.

If somebody is pleased by your punishing yourself[1] it is not correct to describe that as the effect of ahimsa. But the matter is not important. As your faith becomes stronger, your reason will develop. The *Gita* seems to tell us that God Himself gives us the light of reason. Our duty is to strengthen our faith. It is, of course, necessary to understand the meaning of faith and reason in this context. We cannot understand them through verbal definitions, but can do so only through true humility. He who believes that he knows, knows nothing. But he who believes that he knows nothing, acquires knowledge at the right time. Even God cannot pour Ganga water into a pot that is full. We should, therefore, always stand before God with empty hands. Our vow of non-possession means the same thing. But I must stop here. You may write to me whenever you wish. They will give your letters to me.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 70

[1] The reference is to standing with knees bent and arms stretched out like a chair.

329. A LETTER[1]

April 4, 1932

If in any situation it is our duty to speak, we must tell the truth whatever the cost.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 71

330. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

April 4, 1932

CHI. MANUDI,

I got your letter, and read the whole of it twice. You need not be scared. It was very good that you saw the woeful condition of Harilal with your own eyes. I knew all about him. However, we should not give up hope of anyone's future. Nothing is beyond God's power? If there is still some merit to Harilal's credit earned through good deeds in the past, it will bear fruit one day. We should not pamper him or have false pity on him, but should make our hearts purer day by day. That will have an effect on Harilal too. You have got to harden your heart and write to him and tell him plainly that, as long as he does not give up drinking, he will have to assume that you do not exist. If all of us adopt such a course, Harilal might take heed. Often a drunkard gives up his evil habit when he is greatly shocked.

I liked your reply about marriage. I am sure it will be all to your good if you stick to your resolution. In your childhood you were so ill that nobody hoped you would live. You were saved because of Ba's patient nursing and the treatment of the Ice Doctor[2]. But owing to that illness, your growth had practically stopped for five years. You are weak even now, and but for Bali's[3] care, you would become ill again. On this account, I always deduct at least five years from your actual

[1] The addressee had asked if one must tell the truth even at the cost of someone else's life.

[2] Dr. Kelkar

[3] Balibehn Vohra, maternal aunt of Manu Gandhi

age. We have already fixed the earliest age for a woman to marry at twenty-one years. The age, therefore, which you have laid down for yourself for marrying is proper. I would regard you as barely fit for marriage at the age of twenty-five. However, I do not wish to bind you to a pledge. I write this only to tell you that your present resolution is right. When Rami wished to get married at a younger age, I did not come in her way though I did not at all like that she should have married at that age. As for you, there are many reasons why you should not marry early. May God keep you firm in your resolution. At present your duty is to apply yourself hard to your studies, build up a strong, healthy body, understand the path which *Gita* teaches and live accordingly.

Write to me from time to time. You may come to see me if you wish. Try and improve your handwriting a good deal.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1511. Courtesy: Manubehn Mashruwala

331. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

April 4, 1932

BHAI VITHALDAS,

We were all very glad to see the letter written in your own hand. Do take sufficient rest. Resume work only after you are physically quite fit.

Another parcel of dates from you arrived before my card could reach you. Dates in which worms have made their appearance should never be considered fit for consumption. They lodge themselves between the rind and the pulp, and washing does not remove them, as I found from my experience of the dates this time. I send most of the quantity to the leper hospital here and eat a little from the portion which is not spoiled. But please send no more. The hard dry dates which are available in the local market are free from worms and they serve my purpose well enough. We cannot afford to waste either time or money. You should, therefore, save both.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9781

332. *LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI*

April 4, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMI,

I got your letter. Pencil handwriting is faint and becomes fainter day by day. By the time the person to whom the letter is addressed gets it, the characters have become so faint that he can read the letter with difficulty, and sometimes it cannot be deciphered at all. Moreover, with pencil you cannot make your handwriting really good. Finally, pencil handwriting cannot be properly judged. In future, as long as you can get ink and pen, resolve to use them in writing letters or anything else.

If Vithaldas is completely restored to health, you too will share the credit.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2812. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

333. *LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI*

April 4, 1932

May God make Raihana healthy both in body and mind and keep her so. Has the pupil gone to the teacher to learn cunning? The teacher's cunning will not avail her. The *bhajan* you have sent will seem good only when I can hear it sung, and that can be when you come and sing it to me. To do so it seems you must turn yourself into a boy to enter the jail! I shall see if Mahadev can sing. Now read the *ghazal* for the day:

> If thou wouldst see Him, with each breath think of Him. Burn thy pride and smear thy body with its ashes; take up the broom of love and with it wipe out the distinctions of me and thee; reduce the notion of reality to dust and sprinkle it on thy prayer carpet; leave the carpet, break up the rosary, throw the sacred books in the river, seek the help of angels and be their servant; do not fast nor keep *Ramzan*, do not go to the mosque nor make obeisances; break to pieces the water jar for prayer cleansing and drink the wine of the joy of union; eat and drink but never be off thy guard; enjoy thy intoxication continuously; burn thy

> egotism. Be neither Mulla nor Brahmin; leave duality and worship Him alone. Shah Kalandar has proclaimed: Say, 'I am He.' Mad Mansur says: My heart has known truth, that is the wine shop of the intoxicated, make that the object of thy visit.[1]

I do feel ashamed of my Urdu handwriting, but [however much I try] I cannot write better with my left hand. It took me nearly three quarters of an hour to write this much. The truth is that I should practise writing every day. But I am rather ambitious and wishing to do all I can during this quiet interval, I cannot give much time to Urdu. It was you who tempted me to try writing Urdu, for you used to write a few Urdu sentences and, trying to write in Urdu myself, I became your pupil! What a pupil, and what a teacher! It is indeed a great pair we make. Let us see now if we can justify the designation.

We are eagerly watching what is now in store for Father. We remember you all very often. Uncle Sardar and Mahadev proudly narrate many incidents about Father. They had the benefit of staying with him. I never got that opportunity. I will have my revenge one day.

I shall expect in your next letter the news of Hamida, Rohini and others.

I got Pashabhai's letter just today. If I cannot send the reply with this, I will write to him later.

I have written enough for the day.

Many, many blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9640

334. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April [*5*][2], *1932*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. You will guess from the handwriting that Mahadev is here. I like your taking interest in everybody's diet. The food taken by our middle class does not constitute a balanced diet and there is no doubt that they ruin their constitution by eating useless stuff. Moreover, doctors and vaidyas in their preoccupation with making money take no note of this

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 435-6. Up to this the letter is in Urdu.
[2] *Vide* "Diary, 1932".

problem. That is why I appreciate the usefulness of your experiments and I hope that Rameshwarji and Lakshminivas have benefited. Keep me informed of whatever fresh discoveries you make.

I am fully aware that misconceptions exist about me. Experience has taught me that most of the misunderstandings are cleared up if one has patience. However long the night may be it is bound to come to an end.

For me the same diet continues. I feel well on it. Do you see Andrews? How is he keeping?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 7897. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

335. *LETTER TO MAITHILISHARAN GUPTA*

April 5 [1932][1]

BHAI MAITHILISHARAN,

I had your letter. I read *Saket*, *Anagh*, *Panchvati* and *Jhankar* with enjoyment. I liked them very much. But I do not consider myself at all qualified to make comments. However, as you have asked for my opinion and I did gather impressions while reading I am putting them down as they occurred to me.

The expression of Urmila's grief, though beautiful in style, could hardly have had a place in *Saket*. That Tulsidas did not say much about Urmila has been held against him. But this omission I have not viewed as a fault. I see in that the artistry of the poet. The composition of *Manas* is such that a worthy character like Urmila is brought to notice only by ellipsis, in that lies the greatness of the work and such characters. The character of Urmila and others could have been delineated only to enhance the impact of Sitaji's character. But Urmila's virtues were of no lesser order than Sita's. Sita's sisters were of the same calibre as herself. *Manas* is an incomparable scripture. The praise of Sita and Rama rings through every page and every verse. I expected to see the same characteristic in *Saket*. I failed in this to some extent for the reason explained above. I may mention one more point. The lamentations of Dasharatha and others described in Tulsidas's *Manas* did not jar. Tulsidasji could not have done anything different. But such lamentations are not appreciated in a book of the

[1] The year is inferred from the contents; *vide* also "Letter to Maithilisharan Gupta", 26-4-1932 and "Diary, 1932", entry under April 5.

present period. It affects adversely the sentiment of valour as well as faith. Those who have faith in the spirit and who consider worldly pleasures as transitory cannot find death and separation unbearable. They might temporarily give way to grief but how can we expect pitiful lamentations from them?

I do not at all mean by all this that you should try to make any improvements in the second edition. But it will be a different matter if you find any worth in my comments.

Mahadev is now with me. I have dictated this to him as the right hand pains and writing with the left hand takes more time.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From Hindi: C.W. 9455. Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi

336. LETTER TO CHAND TYAGI

April 5, 1932

BHAI TYAGIJI,

I was glad to get your letter and gladder still to learn that you are nursing the plague patients. I am not taking milk these days. Here I can do with bread, almonds, dates, vegetables and lemons. My views are the same as before. I am awaiting a letter from Devsharmaji[1]. My right hand pains only when writing, but it has been like this for one year and there is nothing special. Balvir's handwriting is good. Has he got rid of his former faults?

Mahadev is with me. This card is in his hand.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3259

[1] Also known as Acharya Abhaydev

337. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

April 7, 1932

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letters and enclosures, also copy of an article of yours in an old number of *Modern Review*.

I understand and even appreciate the moral repulsion against 'fasting unto death'. I have perhaps some repulsion, if not the same repulsion, against fasting unto death myself, but I remain unmoved. There are many other things I have done and am still doing against my will, because I count my will as nothing before God's will when I see it clearly before me. I will make myself as certain as it is humanly possible to be, that the will that appears to me to be God's is really His, and not the Devil's. But when I am clear about it, I rejoice in obeying that will, rather than mine, although I have no human companion to endorse it. That this kind of fasting has a definite place in Hinduism, and properly so, I have not a shadow of a doubt, but it is a privilege that comes only to a few, and when it comes in obedience to a call from above, it has a mighty force. Only, fasting unto death is a corrupt expression. When I used it first, it had its definite meaning. Now it is being used torn from its context and looks certainly barbarous. But it is there, and its real meaning is unmistakable, and you can almost say that it is not so much of a 'fast unto death' as it is a 'fasting unto a new life'.

All the same, I value your letter and the information you give me about the English attitude. I do want English sympathy in this big struggle. I do want also to be understood. You cannot therefore be too frank or too communicative with me. I shall never misunderstand whatever these few English friends might have to say.

Kerby Page's article which you have sent I shall see as soon as I get the time, and if there is anything worth saying, I shall reduce it to writing.

I hope that your brother's septic teeth were extracted and that he had benefited by the extraction.

You know all about Verrier's change of mind.[1] He had changed it before your blessings were received, and you know the reason also for the change. Whilst I was prepared to bless the

[1] About not marrying Mary Gillett

marriage, I cannot help saying that I blessed the change still more. So much depended upon Verrier's decision. I told him that if it was a human want on his part, he must marry, no matter what misinterpretation might be put upon his action. The change came over both Verrier and Mary without any prompting from anybody at all.

Our love to all.

Yours sincerely,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 1301

338. A LETTER[1]

April 7, 1932

I have your letter. I am unable to say that I have reached my destination. I fear, I have much distance to cover. . . .[2]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 59

339. LETTER TO NRISIMHAPRASAD K. BHATT

April 7, 1932

The fear of tuberculosis is worse than the disease itself.[3] The person who is suspected to have got it is always brooding over the disease and sees its symptoms in every discomfort that he suffers. If he can be helped to get rid of this obsession, he recovers very soon.

Why do you worry over the problem of money?[4] You ought to learn this lesson from me, for I am an expert in the subject. Long before the country made me a Mahatma, I had learnt that, just as it is bad economics to do business with borrowed money, so it is a false conception of dharma to run a public institution with borrowed money. And if the ablest workers of an institution have to go out begging for money to run it, I would say that that is like doing business with borrowed money. Instead

[1] The addressee, an overseer, had asked Gandhiji whether he had attained salvation and seen God face to face.

[2] Omission as in the source

[3] The addressee had mentioned the proposal to remove Gijubhai Badheka's child to Panchgani for treatment.

[4] The addressee had expressed his fears about the financial position of Dakshinamurti, an educational institution, started by him in Bhavnagar.

of fixing a specific number, why don't you follow this other method, namely, to admit only as many pupils as you can manage with the money which you get. It is the easiest thing in the world to do that. You have only to make up your mind; that is all. At the beginning of every year, you should estimate the sum which you will need. If you get it without having to go begging for it, you should carry on, otherwise you should close the institution. Yours is an established institution now, with a glorious record. You have efficient teachers. Why, then, have you no faith? Offer up your venture wholly as sacrifice to the Lord and resolve to run it in His name. He will then keep it running if He so wills. "We have heard of none who loved the Lord and whose honour He did not uphold." We sang this *bhajan* at the time of the evening prayer today. I was reminded of it by a letter which I wrote to a girl. You say that the problem would not have worried you if Vallabhbhai or I had been out of jail. But where is the problem? And if there is any, who are we to solve it? Can one blind man lead another blind man? If you think that there is a problem, leave it to Him. Do not dismiss all this as mere philosophizing, but try to act upon it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 78

340. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

April 7, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

We can keep our minds pure by thinking good thoughts. We can get good thoughts by doing good actions. We cannot always know when an animal is dying. Often, the fact can be found out only by an experienced man.

I also am inquiring about Bhai.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I forgot to write in your own letter. Please forgive me. I am keeping the slip with me.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5771. Also C.W. 2994. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

341. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

April 8, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter.[1] It seems to me that the trouble with the right hand will persist. On coming here I began writing freely with the right hand and I soon discovered that it was no use. It may be one sign of creeping old age. If it is, it is cause neither for grief nor wonder. Had I learnt to use the body merely as an instrument of service and His temple, old age would have been like a beautiful ripe fruit with all the qualities of its species at their highest. It would be a stroke of good fortune if I escape merely with such disability. But even this is idle speculation. I have no business to speculate about these things. It is enough to note such things and take reasonable precautions within the prescribed limits. You will not therefore worry about the hand.

My weight stands at 106 lb. except for the fasting day when it naturally dropped to 103½. I take during 24 hours five to six slices of well-toasted white bread, 30 dates, bowlful of boiled vegetable once, two spoonful of honey at 4.15 a.m. with a pinch of soda and hot water and soda and lemon[2] twice. I take two ounces (nearly) of almond paste. This seems to satisfy me; if it fails, I shall go back to milk. The bowels move perfectly twice or thrice daily without my medicament or appliances. I sleep between 9 and 3.40 and twice during the daytime 20 minutes each time. I spin 375 rounds in two days. I have not begun carding yet. Your supply[3] seems to be inexhaustible. The balance of the time is given to reading and writing. Just now I am reading Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*, a deeply human document. He is dreadfully in earnest. These letters are his last effort at self-expression in word and deed. Much time is taken up in writing and now also dictating letters. As I am allowed to write to fellow-prisoners, naturally there is more writing to be done than last time. I am glad of it. I send something on moral problems to

[1] For extracts, reproduced from *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, *vide* Appendix V.

[2] "With cold water"—Mirabehn

[3] "Of slivers" —Mirabehn

the Ashram every week. And now I have commenced the history[1] of the Ashram for the past five days.

This answers all your questions about self.

Vallabhbhai and Mahadev are doing excellently. . . .[2] In these matters we are subject to no restrictions that we would not impose upon ourselves.

Abstention from salt for a time can do no harm and does produce the results you have noticed for yourself. The weakening effect you notice is temporary and can be greatly counteracted by taking fresh limes in some shape or other. I suppose you know that I have gone without salt continuously for six or eight years without noticing any ill effect. Many had joined me in the experiment, you may therefore prolong your saltless experiment to the extent that it benefits you. Milk contains much free salt. There is a saltish taste in raw milk.

I understand and appreciate all you say about yourself. Let me put you at ease. When I come out you shall certainly be with me and resume your original work of personal service. I quite clearly see that it is the only way for your self-expansion. I shall no longer be guilty as I have been before of thwarting you in any way whatsoever. My only consolation in thinking over the past is that in all I did I was guided by nothing else than the deepest love for you and regard for your well-being. I see once more that good government is no substitute for self-government.[3] A Gujarati proverb says what one sees for oneself may not be visible to the nearest friend even though he may have ever[4] so powerful a searchlight. Both these proverbs may not be universally applicable. They certainly are in your case. You need therefore fear no interference from me henceforth. And who can give me more loving service than you?

Mahadev has the hymns you sent him. He is going to work at them.

I forgot to tell you that I have now developed the habit of studying the heavens. As you see my pen is exhausted. This is Mahadev's. And it is now past bed time, 9.15. But I think I

[1] Gandhiji had started writing it in Gujarati on April 5, 1932; *vide* "Diary, 1932". Its last available portion was written on July 11, 1932, under which date the book is included in Vol. L.

[2] One sentence was censored by the jail authorities.

[3] This sentence, censored by the jail authorities, is reproduced here from *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 63.

[4] The source has "never".

have left nothing unanswered. I have a full letter from Nurgis about Jal. What a deliverance!

Love from us all.

BAPU

[PS.]

I enclose an interesting cutting which I consider to be non-political enough to pass muster.

From a photostat: C.W. 9506. Courtesy: Mirabehn

342. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

April 8, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letters. I did get Pyarelal's letter, and had also replied to him. You should now learn to pronounce Sanskrit words correctly and learn the grammar too. This in addition to spinning on *takli*. Do you suffer from constipation? You should improve your health. I had liked the first part of *Saraswatichandra*[1] very much, but you ought to read all the four parts. You should also read the four parts of *Kavyadohan*. Besides, you should read *Karanghelo*[2] and *Vanaraj Chavdo*, as also some writings of Narmadashankar[3] and Manilal Nabhubhai[4]. If you read these works, you will have a complete understanding of the nature of the Gujarati language. Perhaps you yourself can collect these books and send them.

I didn't know at all about the Raleigh bicycle having come to India. I will write to Kingsley Hall. I got Rolland's books. I will read them. Taradevi[5] is here. I had even a letter from her. She and the other women are quite happy. She has asked for a copy of the *Ramayana*. I will send one to her. I got two letters from Sushila. If she could pick up enough courage to write, she wouldn't be Pyarelal's sister, [would she?] The book about Lancashire has gone to [Chhaganlal] Joshi. I will read it when it comes back to me, and give my opinion. I have not collected many books this time. But I do receive some from time to time. I have not yet come across any which I should like to send to

[1] Gujarati novel by Govardhanram Tripathi

[2] Gujarati novel by Nandshankar Mehta

[3] 1833-86; Gujarati poet, popularly known as 'Kavi Narmad'

[4] Dwivedi (1858-98); Gujarati man of letters and Vedantist thinker

[5] Pyarelal's mother

you. I have received the volumes of Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*; if you wish, I may send them to you. Pyarelal will hardly get anything new even from them. I get letters from Muriel, Agatha and Horace. My weight remains what it was, that is, 106 lb. This is the food which I take: almonds crushed into paste, dates, toast, lemon-juice and a boiled vegetable with one meal. So far I have been able to do without milk. This time I don't suffer from constipation at all. The hours of sleep have increased. I see that the weakness of the hand persists but I feel no pain. I read only for a little while. Just now I am reading Ruskin's *Fors*. As for writing, I have finished the remaining discourses on the *Gita*. I have now taken in hand a history of the Ashram. I dictate to Mahadev. The letters to Ashram inmates take a good deal of my time, particularly because I write with the left hand. Spinning takes from one and a half to two hours. Because of the trouble with the hand I deliberately do not spin longer. I have made it a rule to spin 375 rounds in two days. I have not carded any cotton so far. I have still a stock of the slivers which Mira left with me. Mahadev has started carding.

I was going to ask you about Harilal[1], but meanwhile you have picked up courage to question me on the subject. I wished to ask you what you had done, and now you have turned round on me. My condition remains. Why cannot you write? You should write what you can; it will be for me to revise and pass what you write. You should overcome your hesitation and start writing. It is probably out of lethargy that you do not try at all. If so, overcome your lethargy. If you do this, I will keep my promise of writing a foreword. The book cannot be published just now, but it is very desirable that the writing should be over. I may not perhaps be able to write the foreword after I am released. I hope you realize that there is a reason for my insisting that you should start writing. There will be no grace in publishing the letters without your essay. You ought not to do that.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1834

[1] Addressee's husband, whose letters Kusum Desai had been planning publish with a foreword by Gandhiji and a life-sketch by her

343. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 8, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

Since Dhurandhar is here, I shall probably see him some time. Instead of wishing to kill many birds with one stone, why not wish to bring down many berries with one hit? You should never wish to kill a bird.

It was fortunate that you escaped being hurt by the tile.[1] We should conclude from this that you are destined to do much more.

You need not at all feel confused about the problem concerning the women. You may give your services if they want them and if you have confidence in yourself. Otherwise you should forget the suggestion as if it had never been made. You should have confidence in yourself not about your ability to teach the women, but about your humility, about your ability not to let any misunderstanding occur and to manage any difficult situation that may arise. We often hesitate to undertake a responsibility out of fear of humiliation, misunderstanding, etc. If you can overcome such hesitation, you may take up the responsibility. You do believe that all the women are good by nature. They require the help of someone who can express their thoughts in words and maintain records for them. An illiterate mother may have more sense and practical wisdom than her educated daughter, but, being illiterate, she may not be able to use them. A daughter can supply this deficiency. I should like you to do that. I certainly don't believe that the Association was doing very good work when Gangabehn was there. But on one pretext or another, she could bring all of them together. It was her ambition to do this work and she sowed the seed. She is doing similar work here too. I should like to see that seed grown into a tree. The women certainly do social work, but as individuals. I should like them to assume responsibility as a body, for some social service. This will create in them capacity for organization. When such capacity has been created, individuals may come and go but the organization will remain. God has given such capacity only to human

[1] The addressee was sleeping in a courtyard and a gust of wind sent a tile from the roof hurtling on her bed.

beings. In our country, women have not cultivated it so far. The blame for this lies with the men. But that is a question with which we need not concern ourselves just now. If we believe that women must acquire this capacity for organization, we should try to cultivate it in them. It does not matter if we commence only with my writing a letter to their Association and their replying to me. Slowly (no matter, if very slowly) we may take up other activities. If you have fully understood what I have suggested and if the suggestion has appealed to you, if the other women also approve of it and if they are ready to take interest in carrying it out, you may take up this work. If, however, you see difficulties in carrying it out or see no meaning in it, you may drop the idea.

Don't pay attention just now to my request[1] to you to send me a list of books. I don't want you, for the present, to send anything besides the books of Upton Sinclair which I have asked you to send.

I don't at all like the practice of converting a person from one religion to another. I don't believe that marriage between a man and a woman professing different faiths is impossible or always undesirable.

I think the distinguishing features of Hinduism are cow-protection and varnashrama. Any nation that wants to rise should follow the path of truth and non-violence.

I think I have answered all your questions.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

My copy of the *Gujarati Jodanikosh*, second edition, published by the Vidyapith, is lying there. Send it to me.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10280. Also C.W. 6728. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] *Vide* p. 262.

344. *LETTER TO SECRETARY OF SANTRAM ASHRAM*

April 8, 1932

I got your letter and the Gujarati *Gita* and *Ramayana*. I thank Maharajshri for both. If Brahmin pandits who are also men of saintly character propagate knowledge of the Upanishads and other scriptures among the people, no one can doubt that they would be doing a good thing. But nowadays learning and goodness rarely go together. Hence I am a little indifferent towards such activities.

I am similarly indifferent, or even a little more so, towards public readings of the *Gita* and the *Ramayana*. I put no value on such readings by persons who do not understand the meaning of what they read, or even if they understand it, read the scriptures loudly—as if merely doing that would earn them holy merit—or read them for show or for fame. I even believe that such readings actually do harm. If Maharajshri has found a remedy for these evils and has succeeded in avoiding them in the readings organized by him, I have no doubt that they will do good to the people.

It should be remembered that I am a prisoner and a letter of this kind should not be used in public. I request you, therefore, to be careful in this matter.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 81-2

345. *LETTER TO HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR*

April 8, 1932

1 and 2. We must believe in God if we believe in ourselves. If living beings have existence God is the sum total of all life and this in my view is the strongest proof.

3. The denial of God is injurious in the same way as denial of ourselves. That is to say, to deny God is like committing suicide. The fact remains that it is one thing to believe in God and quite another to realize God emotionally and act accordingly. Truly, no one in the world is an atheist; atheism is merely a pose.

4. One can realize God only by ridding oneself totally of attachment, aversion, etc., and in no other way. I hold that one who claims to have realized God has not truly done so. Realization can be experienced, but is beyond description. Of this I have no doubt.

5. I can live only by having faith in God. My definition of God must always be kept in mind. For me there is no other God than Truth; Truth is God.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 82

346. A LETTER

April 9, 1932

CHI.,

Gods signify those who do good and demons those who do evil. There can be no peace between good and evil. Hence there is no question of partiality in this matter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9019. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

347. A LETTER

April 9, 1932

CHI.,

We should not pay attention to the stories of miracles in the life of Mirabai. I also don't believe that they occurred in that very manner. What we have to remember is the holiness of her character. . . .[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9025. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The rest of the letter is not available.

348. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

April 9, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

If we treat an enemy as a friend, he will certainly come ultimately to trust us.

People who are ill, feel tempted to eat all kinds of things. If one does not succumb to such temptations, one would get all right sooner. Your weight will increase slowly.

If you pay sufficient attention, you will surely be able to understand the *Gita*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4082. Also C.W. 46. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

349. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

April 9, 1932

CHI. MANU,

Your letter was well written. The handwriting ought to improve. How did you fall ill? I hope you are completely all right now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7426. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

350. *LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI*[1]

April 9, 1932

CHI.,

People worship the sacred *tulsi* because the plant is believed to possess certain virtues. One should be angry with anger itself. Because the other person forgets himself or herself, why should we do the same? Grown-up people also do wrong in getting angry. Even when they become angry, one should cling to what one [believes][2] to be the truth. Did you get the letter which your elder brother[3] wrote to you?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9470. Also C.W. 9018. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

351. *LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI M. PATEL*

April 9, 1932

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

This is only to acknowledge your letter. Anybody who attempts to do something which is beyond his capacity lacks wisdom. He deserves compliments who does his duty to the best of his ability. Really speaking, a person need not be complimented for his devotion to duty, but when most people disown their obligations, the few who discharge theirs deserve compliments.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8995. Also C.W. 9014. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Addressee's name is supplied from the S.N. Register.
[2] From the C.W. copy
[3] Mahadev Desai

352. *LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL*

April 9, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

God doesn't come from anywhere or go away anywhere. He simply exists for ever. I see nothing wrong in playing cards during one's free time. But I would not encourage anybody to do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9424. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

353. *LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

April 9, 1932

CHI. JAMNALAL,

All of us had been eagerly awaiting a letter from you. It was a full one. I am very happy that the food in this jail has agreed with you. I had heard about Janakibehn and Kamalnayan. If Vinoba has not taken a vow to the contrary, I think it is necessary that he should drink milk. Even in that jail he seems to have adopted a strenuous programme. In order to be able to keep it up, I think he should drink milk. I am convinced that there must be some vegetable food which has the beneficial properties of milk but is free from its noxious one. But those vaids who are sufficiently well-read in their science to be able to discover it have never thought about the possibility of there being such a food and the task is beyond the capacity of laymen like us. Or perhaps we can discover it, if we give all our attention to this one problem. It is my firm conviction that it would be improper for any of us to do so. It is therefore our duty to cling to the task which has fallen to our lot unsought. I cannot help thinking that it is not proper for Vinoba to let his weight fall so low.

A fine group seems to have formed there with you. I envy you your 'C' class. I had felt very happy when I heard that you were placed in that class. I did not at all feel afraid that it might affect your health. I have never doubted your ability to safeguard your own health and that of your companions. Had

you not been placed in 'C' class, you would never have got the experience you are now getting.

Tell Pyarelal that, as I have fully replied[1] to the letter which Kusum wrote at his instance, I don't dictate anything here. He will probably get that reply before you get this letter. Let me know if he does not. All three of us are very well. For the past two months, my diet has been bread, almonds, dates, one vegetable and a sour lime. This keeps me all right. I never feel the need for a laxative or an enema. I am engaged at present in writing the history of the Ashram. Writing letters takes up a good deal of my time. In this small circle, we talk about you several times daily. Convey our regards to all. Write to me whenever you can.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2897

354. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

April 9, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

It is possible even to win a kingdom by truth, which means that there is nothing that cannot be attained with the help of truth. But this does not mean that one should make such an attempt. To do so would be tantamount to putting God to test. He who worships God would covet no kingdom. For him kingdom consists in following the path of truth. I love all languages. The meaning of *yajna* has been continually expanding. Gujarati women's dress is quite good. It requires two changes: an underwear, and a shirt in place of the blouse.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9949. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

[1] *Vide* pp. 280-1.

355. A LETTER

April 10, 1932

CHI.,

It depends on the nature of the vow. Someone may take a vow of spinning for a certain number of hours, and another person may take a vow of spinning a certain number of rounds. Some others may take a vow in regard to both, that is, to spin a minimum number of rounds and for a minimum number of hours. One must fulfil in letter and spirit the vow which one has taken.

Our emotions and desires are sometimes ruled by God and sometimes by Satan. We are tossed between them and that is why our emotions and desires are constantly changing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9017. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

356. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

April 10, 1932

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

You should drink through the nostrils every day tepid water in which soda and salt have been dissolved. The nasal passage, then, will not get blocked. This is a useful habit to form.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 13

357. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

April 10, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

What you say about the Vidyapith library is correct.

That one should not speak anything to cause pain to a person does not mean that one should not speak anything which might pain him. Though the speaker did not wish to cause pain, it is possible that the other person will feel hurt. When a father tells his son not to drink bhang, he does not wish to cause him pain but the latter [being addicted to bhang], feels hurt. Nevertheless, it was the father's duty to forbid the son to drink bhang.

Mahadev did not follow what I said[1] about "Narayanrao". What is the origin of the name "Hasude"?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 225. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

358. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

April 10, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I hope to get in the next letter a short report of your programme of work during the National Week[2]. We here have not been able to do anything besides fasting and spinning a little more than on other days. You still make mistakes in spelling words. See that such mistakes do not occur. You should learn from my deficiencies. We have had that *Jodani Kosh* prepared in a hurry for people like you.

If you really keep awake during prayers, you have certainly advanced one step.

Mother *Gita* has already answered the question, 'What makes us commit sin?' Desire and anger do that. All of you will be able to see this truth if you recollect your own actions of this type

[1] *Vide* pp. 194-5.

[2] Celebrated from April 6 to 13 since the starting of the satyagraha movement in 1919

in the past. Think and verify the truth of this. The Students' Union is not independent to the extent that it functions subject to the Ashram rules. The freedom of all such associations is limited to some extent. The Students' Union is of course free in its own field.

If I liked any manual work worth the name in my student days, I may perhaps say that I liked book-binding and carpentry. There are so many crafts and industries relating to spinning alone that the question of selecting some other work in addition does not arise. In order to have a full knowledge of the science of spinning, one must have some knowledge of each of the following: agriculture, chemistry, dyeing, painting, carpentry, smithy, weaving, knitting, sewing, carding, ginning, laundry work, history of the industries of the different countries, engraving, arithmetic, geometry, etc. Think for yourselves and see whether a general knowledge of the subjects just mentioned is or is not essential for [proficiency in the] science of spinning. I have enumerated here only the arts and the crafts which I could remember. If you sit together and discuss, you will find some more to add to the list. Let me know if you can think of more. I hope that you will preserve my list at least.

We worship Krishna the perfect avatar of God and not the Krishna who is supposed to have done so many bad things. That is, we worship not the historical Krishna but Krishna, the Prince of Yogis, who served to Arjuna the nectar of the *Gita*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 9020. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

359. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

April 10, 1932

CHI. MANUDI,

I am happy that you write to me. You should give up fear of Harilal and forget him altogether. Bali is a brave woman. Her slapping [your father][1] was not an act of violence, but showed her deep love.

You must have received the letter[2] which I wrote to you last week. I explained everything in it, and so I don't write anything

[1] From *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 91
[2] *Vide* pp. 269-70.

more today. What is your weight now? If you have not written any letter to Ba, you should write one. She will surely expect a letter from you.

Do you pray daily? Do you sing *bhajans*? If you have not been doing either, start doing both.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1512. Courtesy: Manubehn Mashruwala

360. LETTER TO VIMALCHANDRA V. DESAI

April 10, 1932

CHI. NANU,

You have written a very good letter. But you should write figures so carefully that they look like printed ones. If you are really eager to learn the primer, Premabehn will teach you. Form the habit of doing very well whatever you do.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5755. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

361. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

April 10, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

The slivers given by Mirabehn are still not exhausted. Moreover, Mahadev has begun carding from the 5th and I also get a share from the slivers which he makes. I discontinued the massage during my last imprisonment. However, Mahadev rubs ghee on the soles of my feet.

I shall write on the subject of teachers if I can. It is through love and not through fear that a child can be made to give up habits like stealing things. Scolding a child has little effect.

The difference between flattery and pure service is [as great] as that between falsehood and truth.

In regard to other things which one should avoid doing, fear of social criticism has a legitimate place. We need not fear it but we should not disregard it either.

Morality is both absolute and relative.

No harm may result from chemistry itself but its misuse will certainly do harm. It is being misused very much.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7493. Also C.W. 4970. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

362. *LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA*

April 10, 1932

CHI. BRIJKISAN,

I have your letter. You did well in giving me detailed news of yourself. I consider you lucky to have Dr. [M.A. Ansari][1] and others as companions. Convey to them *salaam* and *vandemataram* from all the three of us. I hope the Doctor has a new set of teeth by now. Your letter of the 3rd instant did not reach me.

Of course you have my blessings for your thirty-third birthday. One-third of your life-span is gone by. We must hope that you avail yourself fully of the two-thirds left and that you may be granted all means of service. As you have the right aspirations I am sure that you will gradually develop the necessary strength of character and other qualities.

Continue writing. I do get news about Devdas but there has been no recent news about Krishnan Nair. I have been keeping excellent health, so have Sardar Vallabhbhai and Mahadev. I have given up milk for the last two months and take almonds instead. I take bread, one vegetable and lemons since giving up milk and seem to be thriving so far. The weight is the same, i.e., 106 lb., as when I entered the jail. The *Gita Shabdanukrama* was finished last year. At present I am writing the history of the Ashram. I read a little and of course spin.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2391

[1] The addressee was, at this time, incarcerated along with Dr. Ansari in the Delhi jail. He was transferred to Multan jail on April 11.

363. *TELEGRAM TO KAMALA NEHRU*[1]

April 11, 1932

ANAND BHAWAN
ALLAHABAD

DISTRESSED LEARN MOTHER SUSTAINED INJURY AT PUBLIC MEETING[2] AND RANJIT[3] LAID UP FEVER. HOPE NOTHING SERIOUS. PLEASE WIRE FULL PARTICULARS.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 (40) (3), Pt. I, p. 127; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18-4-1932

364. *WATCHING THE HEAVENS-I*[4]

A lover of truth feels undiminished joy till the end of his life. He never regards himself as too old to keep on striving for a vision of the God of Truth. He who undertakes every activity in order to see God, also called Truth, who sees Truth in everything [that exists] will not find old age an obstacle [in his quest]. So far as that quest is concerned, the seeker regards himself as immortal and for ever young.

I, for one, have been in this beautiful state of mind for years. I have never felt old age as an obstacle to devoting myself to learning anything which I believed would take me nearer to the God of Truth. A recent example of this is my desire for a study of the heavens. Deep in my heart, I had felt often enough the desire to know something about the stars, but I had assumed that the numerous activities which claimed my attention did not permit me to satisfy it. Maybe my belief was wrong, but so long as I did not myself see the error in it it could not but prevent me from making the necessary effort. I think most probably I myself had prompted Shankerlal, during our imprisonment in

[1] Wife of Jawaharlal Nehru

[2] At Allahabad during the National Week celebrations; Swaruprani Nehru, addressee's mother-in-law, was injured when police made a lathi charge.

[3] Ranjit S. Pandit, addressee's brother-in-law

[4] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi"; *vide* the following item.

1922 [to take up this study]. Books on the subject were received. Shankerlal picked up enough knowledge to satisfy him. I could find no time!

In 1930-31, I had the good fortune to enjoy Kakasaheb's company [in jail]. He was well versed in this subject. But I did not avail myself of the opportunity, for my desire was not strong enough then. In 1931, I was filled with sudden enthusiasm during the last month of my stay in jail. Why should I not give time to watch that which, to the outward eye, instantaneously reveals the presence of God? How pathetic that one should see like an animal merely with the physical eye without the grand sight penetrating to the sensory nerves behind? How could I let go this fine opportunity to watch the great divine *lila*[1]? I am now quenching the thirst which was awakened then for a knowledge of the heavens, and I have progressed so far that I cannot restrain myself from sharing with inmates of the Ashram the thoughts which fill my mind.

We are taught right from our childhood that our bodies are made of the five great elements—earth, water, *akash*, light and air. We ought to know something about them, but in fact we know very little. At the moment we are concerned with *akash*.

Akash means space. If there were no space in our bodies, we would not be able to live even for a moment. This is true about the universe too. Our earth is surrounded by infinite space. The blue which we see extending over us in all directions is *akash*. The earth has poles. It is a solid sphere, and its axis is 7,900 miles long. But the *akash* is empty space. If we imagine this space to have an axis, we shall have to imagine it to be of infinite length. In this infinite space, the earth is like a mere particle of sand, and on this particle of sand each one of us is a particle, of such infinitesimal size that it is impossible to explain how small it is. There is, therefore, no exaggeration at all in saying that, as bodies, we are mere ciphers. Our body, as compared with the size of the earth, is a thousand times more insignificant than an ant's is as compared with ours. Why, then, should we feel attached to it? Why should we grieve when a body perishes?

However, though in itself the human body is insignificant, it has indeed great value, for it is the house of the *atman*, in truth of the *Paramatman*, of the God of Truth, if we but realize it.

If this thought sinks deep into our heart, we would never want to make it an instrument of enjoying gross pleasures. And

[1] Play, sport

if we fill our imagination with the heavens and, realizing the meaning of their vastness, understand our utter insignificance, all our pride would vanish. If the countless shining divinities in the sky did not exist, we would not have come into existence. Inspite of the many discoveries of astronomers, our knowledge about the sky is practically nil. What little we know tells us beyond the shadow of a doubt that if the sun-god rested even for a day from his ever ceaseless *tapascharya*, we would perish. Likewise, if the moon stopped raining down her cool rays, we would meet with the same fate. And we can also infer that the countless stars which we see in the sky at night have some role in maintaining this world in existence. Thus, we are most intimately connected with every living creature in the world and with everything that exists; everything depends for its existence on everything else. Hence we ought to try and know something about our benefactors the shining divinities gliding in the sky.

There is one more reason why we ought to do this. We have a saying among us: "The hills look beautiful from a distance." There is much truth in this saying. The sun, which keeps us alive from a distance, would instantly burn us to ashes if we went near it. This is also true about the other heavenly bodies. Since we know both the beneficial and the harmful properties of the things which surround us on this earth, we may sometimes feel aversion to them and even feel ourselves polluted by physical contact with some of them. Of the divinities in the sky, however, we know only the merits. Hence we never tire of watching them. Knowledge about them can never harm us. Moreover, as we meditate on these divinities, we can raise our imagination with ennobling ideas as high as we wish.

There is no doubt at all that every obstacle which we place between ourselves and the sky harms us physically, mentally and spiritually. If we lived in a natural state, we would live under the sky for all the twenty-four hours of the day. If we cannot do that, we should spend in the open as many hours as we can. We can watch the heavens, i.e., the stars, only at night, and we can do that best lying on our backs. Hence, anybody who wishes to derive the utmost profit from the observation of the stars should sleep in the open directly under the sky. If there are tall buildings or trees near the place where one is sleeping, they will obstruct the view.

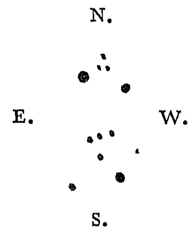
Both children and grown-ups love dramas and the spectacular scenes which they present. But no drama composed or acted by human beings can even equal the great spectacle which Nature

has arranged for us on the stage of the sky. Moreover, in a theatre we may harm our eyes, breathe unclean air and also run a great risk of our moral sense being weakened. On the other hand, this drama arranged by Nature can do us nothing but good. Watching the stars soothes the eyes; to watch the stars, one must remain outdoors, and this gives fresh air to the lungs; and we have heard of no instance so far of harm having been done to moral character by watching the stars. The more we meditate on this miracle of God, the more we grow spiritually. Anybody who is afflicted by impure thoughts and gets dreams in his sleep should try to sleep in the open and let himself be absorbed in watching the stars. He will soon fall into dreamless sleep. When we are totally absorbed in the grand spectacle in the heavens, we seem to hear those shining bodies in their utter silence, singing the praise of God. Let him, who has eyes to see, watch the ever-changing patterns of this eternal dance. Let him, who has ears to hear, listen to the silent music of these countless *gandharvas*.

Let us now try to learn something about these stars, or rather let me share with all co-workers what little knowledge I have picked up. The better method, of course, would be to learn something about the earth before proceeding to observation of the stars. It is quite likely that the boys and girls in the Ashram who have had the benefit of Kakasaheb's company already know the facts which I am going to describe. I should be happy if that is so. I am writing this for all inmates of the Ashram, children and grown-ups, old and new. Those to whom the subject is interesting will find the study quite easy.

The right time for the study of the sky is immediately after prayer. We need not give it more than twenty minutes at a time. Those who understand the true meaning of this study will regard it as a part of the prayer. Those of the inmates who sleep in the open may spend as much time as they wish, when they are alone, in watching the stars. As they become absorbed in the scene, they will soon fall asleep. If they wake up during the night, they may spend some more time in looking at the sky. Since the sky seems to be moving all the time, the scene keeps changing from second to second.

If we look at the sky at 8 p.m. in the west, we shall see a grand figure.



This figure will be in the west. I see it directly opposite me as I lie on my back with my head in the east. No one who sees the figure from this position will ever forget it afterwards. Since this is the bright half of the month, this and other constellations shine with a rather pale light, but even then this particular constellation is so bright that even a novice like me can spot it easily. I shall refer next time to the beliefs which people formerly held about this group both in our country and in the West. Just now, I shall only tell you that from the description of the position of this constellation in the Vedas, Tilak Maharaj was able to ascertain the date of the Vedas. We have in the Ashram library, a copy of the treatise by the late Shri Dikshit which gives plenty of information on this subject. My job is only to arouse interest in this direction. Once that is done, I myself shall learn more about the subject from the inmates of the Ashram. For me, these constellations have become a means of communion with God. May they be so for the inmates of the Ashram too.

"Live as you like,
But realize Hari somehow, anyhow."

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8218. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

365. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 11, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter. I am certainly happy that nobody comes to see me. My chief reason is that such visits mean unnecessary expenditure. It makes no difference who spends the money. When a visit cannot be avoided, of course we don't mind. In such circumstances we may go even to Ceylon. Having said this, let me add that those to whom this view does not appeal need not act on it. I certainly cannot measure the strength of feelings of those who are outside.

I am sure Tilakam will not go to Malabar. He will have to be sent somewhere else. If we can send him to Bombay, the arrangement is worth trying. Sometimes it happens that Bombay suits persons whom Ahmedabad does not suit. The air in Bombay is certainly like what it is in Malabar. We know that it suited Jamna. Write to Manilal (Revashankerbhai's) and ask his view, or to Damodardas, if you approve of my suggestion. I hope Manu has completely recovered now. If Amtul doesn't have enough money, I think we should provide her the fare and other expenses.

I understand what you say about the Vidyapith library. Do only what seems best to all of you.

It is now two months since I gave up milk. I have observed no ill effects of the step. The weight is maintained, more or less. The strength also has remained unaffected. I am, therefore, continuing the experiment. As I have explained in a previous letter, I am gradually coming to the conclusion that people who do not lead a very strenuous life and who can sleep and rest regularly, can do without milk. In other words, milk is necessary only for a life of *rajasik* activities.

I do realize Hariyomal's worth. See that he does not ruin his health through his obstinacy. All of us know what Krishnamaiyadevi is, but we should tolerate her faults as we do the faults of a member of our family, should indeed go a little further than we would in the case of our own family members. When you feel that the limit is reached, you may stop sending money. I cannot say anything more than this from here.

You may give the permission asked for, for translating *Anasaktiyoga* into Malayalam. I gather from your letter that Harihar Sharma is not in the Ashram at present. My impression is that he is with Rajagopalachari.

What you say about Mathuradas is correct.

I have not received Jethalal's report from Anantpur. Nor have I had any letter from him. If Harilal comes to the Ashram, I think he should be permitted to stay there only on condition that now he gives up drinking. You should now consider how long Padma may stay on in Almora. Ascertain her own view and also that of Sitla Sahai's in the matter.

I think I have discussed sufficiently often in the past how people should act if a tiger makes its appearance in the Ashram. Let them follow what they remember and what they have imbibed in their lives from all that I have said.

I have sent from here directly, through Chintamani Shastri, a letter of condolence about [the death of] Vishnu Kane of Sasvane.

Censor all letters. Raojibhai's letter should not have been passed. I know that this will increase the burden on you. But it is necessary [to do what I have suggested] in order to satisfy that by which we are always guided.

Blessings from
BAPU

Enclosure:
An English letter for Hume.
An article on "Watching the Heavens–I"[1]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I

366. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHAH

April 12, 1932

BHAISHRI HIRALAL,

I got your books and your letter full of love. I got them late by a week because Dahyabhai had forgotten to send them immediately. The books will be useful to me, and your letter and notes will enhance their usefulness. But I am not as ambitious as you seem to think I am. I only wish to acquire sufficient general knowledge to be able to see God in the heavens more clearly. Please send me a small book on astronomy which you think will suit my purpose. I will take proper care of your books. I have observed the care with which you have used them. Generally I hesitate to borrow such books from friends for fear that they may be lost or damaged.

I cannot praise your industry and your neatness too much. But don't you think that your claim to have discovered a master-key may be a little exaggerated?[2] What is that key? Do you have convincing reasons for believing that it is a key, and a master-key at that? Are those reasons accepted as convincing by experts? What benefits do you promise from your discovery? May it not be that there is the same drawback here as in the case of the spinning-wheel, namely, that there is no master-key at all? I am certainly ready to be convinced by you and will weigh your arguments objectively. But I should like you to cultivate the humility which would befit a dedicated seeker

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] In *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, Mahadev Desai explains: "Hiralal Shah wrote to Bapu that he had found the master-key of interpretation in certain subjects."

after truth. I know that it cannot be cultivated consciously. But it lies behind every genuine discovery. The man who has discovered some new truth remains doubtful about his discovery inspite of the immense evidence he may have in favour of his hypothesis. The result is that, when ultimately he does put his discovery before the world, he has realized its truth with absolute conviction. The people are astounded and believe him. There is authority, there is irresistible power, in his words. The world is immediately convinced by them. It is simply awed by the proofs he adduces in support of his hypothesis, for he has examined it from every possible point of view. If this is so about your discovery too, I should have nothing to say in the matter. In that case, all honour to you. It is my wish that it may be so.

All of us, that is, all three, are quite well. Please tell Shankar on my behalf that he should not endanger his health, and ask him to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 93-4

367. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 12, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter. I have noted that the batch of visitors will arrive here on Thursday. Send a cable to America and explain that as a matter of policy the Ashram does not claim exclusive rights [in its publications] or grant them to others. Ask them to write and give details, so that we may think carefully about the request.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

It was indeed a deliverance for poor Mani. I felt happy on reading the news.

I shall be eager to know the results of the non-stop spinning competition. Drop a separate postcard to give me the information.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8219. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

368. LETTER TO SHANTILAL MEHTA

April 12, 1932

CHI. SHANTI,

I got your second letter. Whatever you do, do it patiently. It would be good if you educate your wife a little. I expect that Manilal will come in May. He has taken more time than he had thought he would require in winding up his affairs. Be careful in your expenses. You should either educate your wife yourself or take Jamnadas's advice for making some other arrangement for her education.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./XXII

369. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

April 12, 1932

BHAISHRI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter just when I had been thinking of you and wondering why there was no letter from you. I gather from it that your health is all right. I did get in course of time the letter which you wrote to me from England, and I have the impression that I also replied to it. I am not aware that I always keep my hand under the head when sleeping. It is possible that the hand got under the head sometimes. I was careful in the matter after I got your letter and remained vigilant. I can say, therefore, that I have never kept the hand in that position since then. However, that seems to have had no effect on the condition of the hand. No one has yet been able to make out the cause of this weakness. As a precaution I even gave up writing with the right hand. But afterwards the doctors also came to the conclusion that the pain was not caused by writer's cramp. If your massaging the hand is likely to cure the pain, I can certainly secure the necessary permission. However, if you explain to me the exact manner of doing the massage, I would do it myself or ask Mahadev to do it. But the fact is that the condition is not worth worrying about at all. Nor is the pain continuous. It occurs only when I use the hand to do certain things. The surgeon here was of the opinion that the pain

was a sign of old age and that, therefore, no cure was possible. Certain weaknesses generally appear in old age, since we do not exercise sufficient self-control in our earlier life. This weakness may be one such, and there is no reason for sorrow or wonder if it is so. Hence, apart from taking necessary precautions, I do not worry about the matter. We have now a new doctor here, who believes that the pain can be cured. Let me see what he can do.

I hope both of you enjoy peace of mind. We three are happy. You must of course have met Andrews.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7548. Also C.W. 5023. Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

370. LETTER TO R. V. MARTIN

April 13, 1932

DEAR MAJOR MARTIN,

It was on the 6th of March that I wrote to Major Bhandari[1] about interviews with non-political associates. I sent a reminder[2] on the 30th March, but I am still without a reply. It is high time that I got a reply about the illustrative list I have already submitted. It causes me much inconvenience and some anxiety not to be able to see some of the friends I should like to see and who would like to see me.

The Government have been good enough to appreciate my desire to write to my prison-associates about their welfare. In virtue of the permission, I have been writing to some of them, but from Belgaum I can get no answer. I have written to Shrimati Manibehn Patel. She is Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's daughter, but she has been under the Ashram discipline for over ten years. I knew from the letter that was received some time ago by her father that she had been ailing. I therefore wrote to her asking her to tell me all about her health, but I can get no answer. Then there is Kaka Kalelkar whom you know well and who as you are aware has suffered from tuberculosis and requires special care. I have written to him also and can get no reply. The third is Prabhudas Gandhi[3] a nearly related cousin of mine, brought up under me as an infant whilst I was in South Africa. He is suffering from the same disease as Kaka Kalelkar and has

[1] & [2] *Vide* pp. 182-3 & 253.
[3] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi, Gandhiji's nephew

been under special treatment. And there is Sjt. Narahari Parikh, a member of the Ashram, an old associate. He is also in the Belgaum prison. I inquired about these last two of Kakasaheb Kalelkar, but can get no information. Will you please get the necessary information about their health and diet and weight? Absence of any news about them is a cause of considerable anxiety to me.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly ascertain for me whether the telegram[1] I handed to Major Bhandari addressed to Allahabad making inquiries about the injuries sustained by Mrs. Motilal Nehru and illness of her son-in-law Sjt. Ranjit Pandit was duly sent. I may mention that my relations with the Nehrus are more private and intimate than political, and naturally I am deeply interested in the health and general welfare of the members of the Nehru family.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

371. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

April 13, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

I am always glad when I hear from you. Your letter is interesting and revealing. You are still fretting somewhat. That you should get over. If we have trust in God, we should not worry even as we would not when we have a trustworthy doorkeeper or guard. And who can be a better doorkeeper or guard than God the never-failing. It is not enough that we sing about such things or have a mere intellectual grasp. It is necessary to feel the thing within. Feeling is exactly like feeling pain or pleasure. It admits of or needs no argument. Who can argue us out of our experience? I write this because I want you to be absolutely free from all care and anxiety.

The idea of giving the children dolls of different races was very good. What is the name of the Hindi girl and what is her province

Did I tell you that Mahadev was with me?

Kisses to the children.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 109. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, pp. 89-90

[1] To Kamala Nehru; *vide* p. 295.

372. LETTER TO SHANKARRAO DEO[1]

April 15, 1932

BHAI,

I thought at length over your problem, considered it at night too and we three discussed it together. The conclusion, in our firm opinion, is that your conception of dharma is in fact *adharma*. During satyagraha, no satyagrahi can take any vow at all connected with it without obtaining the sanction of the President. Your interpretation of your vow is a gross distortion. The vow of *madhukari* has no place in the jail. You have no right at present to judge whether or not you will have any sense of shame in going out for *madhukari* after the release. To envisage now the state of your mind upon leaving the jail would be to claim the role of God Almighty. All three of us hold that your duty lies in accepting the food provided for 'C' class prisoners in the spirit of an offering to God. The duty of a sannyasi indicates the same.

Now, as regards clothes, the insistence upon wearing khadi only while in jail is in no way proper. In this matter the duty of every satyagrahi prisoner is to refrain from insisting on wearing khadi until the Congress takes a decision in this. This does not in any way affect your vow of self-sufficiency. I appeal to you to give up the fast, acknowledge your mistake and start eating. It would be beneficial to remain on milk or fruit for a day or two because of the fast. I am writing this from the medical point of view only. I hope you will follow our unprejudiced advice.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 98

[1] Addressee's name is supplied from "Diary, 1932". Mahadev Desai explains: "The addressee was under a vow of self-sufficiency in cloth, so that he wore only clothes spun by himself, and secondly he had vowed to live on food obtained by *madhukari* (begging from a number of houses), and if that was not available, on milk and fruit." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 71)

[2] The addressee gave up the fast on Gandhiji's advice.

373. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

April 15, 1932

DEAR MR. BHANDARI,

I would like the accompanying letter[1] to be delivered to . . .[2] at once, if you approve of the contents. They are nothing but re-exhortation to break his fast and take ordinary food.

Yours sincerely,
M. K GANDHI

[PS.]

If . . .[3] accepts the advice tendered in my letter to him and breaks the fast, I hope you will issue him milk for one or two days, for it is my experience as a fasting expert that the breaking of fasts on solid food often results in great harm to the body.

M. K. GANDHI

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 99

374. LETTER TO KHAGENDRA PRIYA BARUANI

April 15, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for the khadi piece you have sent me. There is no letter accompanying it. Please give me the history of the piece.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. KHAGENDRA PRIYA BARUANI
NOWGONG
ASSAM

From a photostat: C.W. 9551

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2&3] The name is omitted in the source; but it is evident from the contents of the letter that the reference is to Shankarrao Deo.

375. A LETTER

April 16, 1932

MY DEAR,

If almond paste agrees with you, by all means take it. But you must give a fair trial to cod-liver oil. I have heard that it has a nasty taste, but you must cover the taste or take it as we take water without bringing the cup to the lips, so that it goes down the throat without touching the palate.

Love.

BAPU

C.W. 9026. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

376. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

April 17, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

To ensure our spiritual welfare, we should scrupulously follow truth. Since we are caught in the workings of Nature, we cannot escape her effects. It is our duty to fight against evil effects. I don't think there is any truth in the belief that the direction in which we keep our head when sleeping has an effect on us. During the National Week, I spun twice as much as at other times. Mahadev also spun for *yajna* during the Week twice as much as he does normally. And, of course, we also fasted. All of you did much more than that. God ceaselessly employs satyagraha against us, for He does not tolerate untruth in us even for an instant. God means Truth. His satyagraha, therefore, cannot but be perfect. Is not this clear?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9909. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

377. A LETTER

April 17, 1932

CHI.,

We live in the Ashram in order to overcome all fears. We follow truth for its own sake, not out of fear of anybody. Those who have been suppressed by society should courageously break their bonds. This is the purpose for which the Ashram exists. I wish that the women should understand this clearly and avail themselves of the opportunity [which they have got].

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9032. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

378. A LETTER

April 17, 1932

CHI.,

We are not concerned with when the earth came into existence, what was the first living creature on it and when it came into being. That is God's business. We should know our dharma and that should be enough.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9036. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

379. A LETTER

April 17, 1932

BHAI,

Nobody should grieve over Mani's death. For her [illegible] actually a release from terrible suffering. Nor [illegible] for having decided to get her operated. D[illegible] scences. You should all cultivate her virt[illegible] you do that, she will be still alive. [illegible]

375. A LETTER

April 16, 1932

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BAPU

C.W. 9026. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

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April 17, 1932

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Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9036. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

379. A LETTER

April 17, 1932

BHAI,

Nobody should grieve over Mani's death. For her it was actually a release from terrible suffering. Nor should you repent for having decided to get her operated. Do write her reminiscences. You should all cultivate her virtues in yourselves. If you do that, she will be still alive. Truly speaking, however,

the soul never dies. The body which the soul inhabits perishes. That happens to all of us, to some of us sooner than to others.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9043. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

380. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

April 17, 1932

CHI. MANGALA,

You should discover the source of the Chandrabhaga by all of you going for a walk up her bed. It is not at all far. Only the name is big. All of you have seen her mouth. When you walk towards the source, you should also observe the things which you come across on the banks.

We do not spin for money. We should spin, and with careful attention, because spinning is the only work which millions can do. As we spin, one of us will be able to invent a really good spinning-wheel. Even if nobody does that, we shall be able to discover many other improvements.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4083. Also C.W. 47. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

381. LETTER TO NARAYAN DESAI

April 17, 1932

CHI. BABLO,

Because you signed yourself as Narayan, I added "rao".[1] Now you say that you would like to be addressed as 'Narayan Desai'. What is wrong with 'Bablo' then? I will call you 'Desai' after you have invented a prize-winning spinning-wheel. The first Desais were called so in virtue of the posts which they held. How good it would be if you also become a Desai by rendering some great service! There is no fun for a son to be called a Desai because his father was called that. Would it not be better to cling to the name given to one in childhood?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9478

[1] *Vide* pp. 194-5.

382. LETTER TO PRITHURAJ L. ASAR

April 17, 1932

CHI. PRITHURAJ,

I am addressing this letter c/o the Ashram, as you have not mentioned your address. In your excellent letter you say nothing about the hand.

It is not true that the same person cannot be self-reliant and also owe something to his parents. Just as one inherits certain physical qualities from one's parents, so also one may inherit from them wealth and prestige too. It would be false pride to reject them. A good son's duty is to make good use of them and add to them. In this way, one should see that one's own efforts carry forward what the parents had achieved.

We should listen to everybody's advice, but do only what our conscience tells us. And in order that our conscience may speak, we should observe the *yama-niyamas*[1]. Everybody cannot hear the inner voice. We need divine ears to hear it.

Your handwriting shows considerable improvement, but it has not yet become sufficiently well formed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12187-a. Also C.W. 9045. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

383. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI M. PATEL

April 17, 1932

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

Your letters are interesting, but they cross the limits.[2] After all, we hold ourselves answerable to the Emperor of emperors, the God of Truth. I trust all of you and, therefore, never wish to ask you for a report of your work. I shall be satisfied if I get news about how you are. This is not meant as criticism.

[1] Rules and regulations of conduct for a spiritual aspirant
[2] As they strayed into politics

I only wish to draw your attention to this, so that you may be careful, and to reassure you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8996. Also C.W. 9040. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

384. A LETTER

April 17, 1932

CHI.,

I don't know when the evil of untouchability entered [Hinduism]. When there were no cars or other vehicles, people went on foot. Gangabehn and other women are all right. For infants milk would be the best food. I don't remember which play I liked especially. But it is true that I loved seeing dramas.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 9046. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

385. WATCHING THE HEAVENS-II[1]

April 18, 1932

There are many fanciful stories about the cluster of stars of which I drew a figure last time.[2] No figure of this cluster shows all the stars in it. Actually, there are many more stars than you will see in any such figure. Hence the best thing is for everybody to make his or her own drawing and show by dots as many stars as can be seen with the naked eye. If we follow this practice, we shall learn to recognize the different constellations much more quickly. Moreover, the drawings which we ourselves make will be much better for our purpose than those we find in books, for, when the stars are observed from different places

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", *vide* the following item.

[2] *Vide* p. 299.

there are bound to be differences in the drawings which represent them. It would be advisable for everybody to observe the stars from a fixed place and at a fixed time. This suggestion is meant for those who wish to make drawings or who are beginners. After we have become familiar with the different constellations, we shall be able to recognize these heavenly friends of ours, or these divinities, from wherever we observe them.

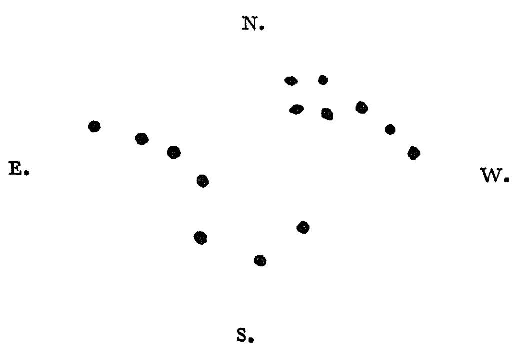
The Hindu, a daily of Madras, publishes a weekly, as does *The Times* of Bombay. Both of them give maps of the sky showing the constellations visible during each month. *The Hindu* gives such a map in its issue of the first week and *The Times* gives it in its issue of the second week. If you can get either of these maps, you will learn much from it. The hundredth number of *Kumar* is due to be published. Shri Hiralal Shah has contributed some articles on this subject for that number. He seems to have made a deep study of the subject. Everybody who is curious may read those articles. Having read those articles, I don't feel inclined to write much here. I will only explain a little more clearly my point of view in studying the sky. If I attempt more, I shall not be able to write on other subjects along with my weekly letters. I may, however, write something occasionally, or in reply to somebody's question.

The constellation of which I drew a figure is known among us as *Mriga* or *Mrigashirsha*. One of the months got its name, *Margashirsha—Magshar*—from this. The months in our calendar got their names from the respective constellations. In the West, the *Mriga* is known as "Orion". The constellation is imagined to be a hunter. To its east, there are two very bright stars in a straight line. They are imagined to be the hunter's dogs. The star in the west is the bigger dog and the one to the north is the smaller dog. The cluster of stars which we see to its east and south, below the star which forms the fourth angle of the figure, is imagined to be a hare. The dogs are running towards it. The three stars in the middle are the jewels in the hunter's waist-band.

Those stars have also been shown as representing the following figures: The bigger of the two dogs is called Lubdhak among us, and those three stars represent the deer's stomach. The stars to the south represent the arrow shot by Lubdhak. The three stars to the north outside the rectangle represent the deer's head. These may be beautiful fancies. A great deal has been written about their origin, but personally I have read very little of all this.

There is, of course, no such figure in the sky. Nor are the stars as near to us as they seem. They are not what they look, but are suns far bigger than our sun. Being millions and millions of miles away from us, they twinkle in the sky as mere points. Our knowledge about these suns is very little. But these clusters of stars serve the most illiterate as their friends. If one looks at them even for a second, one would forget all one's misery and burst forth into praise of God's supreme greatness. One would realize that the stars were God's messengers and kept watch and guarded us every night and consoled us in our suffering. This is the real truth. That they are suns and that they are very far from us are mere intellectual conceptions. Their service to us in filling us with an awareness of God is the real truth for us. From a scientific point of view, we may know a good many properties of water, but may not make any use of our knowledge. The knowledge that it is something with which we can quench our thirst and keep our bodies clean, and its use for such purposes, are very important for us and this knolwedge of the utility of water is for us the truth about it, even if, in real fact, it is a substance with other properties and uses too. And the same is true about the stars. They serve us in many ways. I have drawn attention to what seems to me their chief function and suggested that one should fix one's mind on that and benefit from their message. This is what people seem to have always done from the oldest times. In the course of time, however, all kinds of other stories spread and the various myths concerning the stars arose. We may certainly read all this in order to make the study more interesting, but we should not lose sight of the primary benefit which I have suggested.

Let us now turn our attention to two other groups to the north of *Mriga*.



The bigger group is known as the *Saptarshi*[1], and the smaller one is called *Dhruvamatsya*[2]. I have shown seven stars in each group, but there are many more in the *Saptarshi*. They are shown in the drawings which appear in *The Times* and *The Hindu* weeklies. In *Dhruvamatsya* we shall not see more. It being the bright half of the month just now, we can see only three, two members of the rectangle and the one at the end of the tail, which is called *Dhruva*[3]. This is the only star which remains practically fixed and that is why it was a great help to sailors in old days. Both these groups seem to revolve round *Dhruva*. Here we find it very interesting to watch their motion every night. Their positions change continually all through the night. If we noted these positions from time to time, we would find that they trace quite a big arch. In the West, these two groups are called the Great Bear and the Little Bear respectively. In one of the books, I even saw beautiful drawings of them. The Great Bear is also known as the plough. The *Saptarshi* serves as a clock during the night. After some experience, we can always know the time of the night from the position of the *Saptarshi*.

However valuable these benefits and however interesting these names may be, they seem insignificant to me in comparison with the primary benefit. We should aspire to be as pure as the sky and as bright as the stars. We should pray to God, as the latter seem to be doing in their silence. Just as they do not depart from their paths even for a moment, so let us never be remiss in doing what we are expected to do.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

386. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

April 15/18, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

You must have received my postcard[4] about the cable to be sent to America. Bali and others came and saw me. I was happy that they came.

[1] The Great Bear; literally, 'the seven sages'

[2] The Little Bear; literally 'the Dhruva fish'

[3] The Pole star

[4] *Vide* p. 302.

I think henceforth we should not permit Harilal to stay in the Ashram. I have written to him directly to tell him that he would not be permitted in future to stay there. I have sent the letter through Jamnadas. He begs to be allowed to stay at a place for a few days, and spend them in his habitual pleasures. And then he goes and seeks shelter elsewhere, using the name of the place which he has left. We let him stay in the Ashram so long in the hope that slowly he would change his ways there. But on the contrary, he became worse.

You seem to have celebrated the National Week very well indeed. I hope no one will fall ill in consequence of all that strain. There is one more point in this connection to which I drew your attention once. Let me do so again. Instead of overstraining ourselves during this Week and, when it is over, spending a few days in rest and then resuming our old life, I think it would be much better if we utilize the Week to learn to be more vigilant and then keep up afterwards the increase in production which we effect. In the language of the *Gita*, work done in the former manner would be an instance of demoniac work and work done in the latter manner an instance of God-like work or the first *rajasik* work and the other *sattvik* work.[1] Here we celebrated the Week as I have suggested. Mahadev started carding and spun a little more than he had been doing. But I doubled the quantity of yarn spun daily and, if my right hand does not fail, I intend to keep up the increase.

Even if some of the inmates who fall ill in the Ashram stay elsewhere permanently, we should not mind the expense on their account. Did we not start the Ashram in Almora for this very purpose? Why cannot we start similar institutions at other places too? If we do, then whenever we see that the air and water of the Ashram do not suit a person, as in the case of Jamna, he or she can go and live in one of those institutions. It will not be very expensive to maintain such institutions, and, moreover, we shall be able to start work in those areas. This is what we did in Wardha. In the beginning, we sent Ramniklal or somebody else there.[2] But we had started the Ashram in Wardha in order to keep it up, and so, when Ramniklal fell ill or found it difficult to work there—I forget what actually happened—we sent Vinoba. We don't have another Vinoba, but I think we can spare one of the workers from the Ashram and carry on the work at the new place. If we can find a place on the sea-coast, we should

[1] XVII. 11 & 12

[2] It was Ramniklal Modi.

prefer it. But perhaps this is a long-term plan. Even then this at any rate we can do immediately: find a suitable place on the sea-coast and send some of the inmates there, at the same time making up our minds that if anybody does not improve even after trying two or three such places, he or she may die, but we will not go further than this in providing external help for their illness. Whether we do or do not decide just now to fix any such limit, we must help those who keep bad health and who require change of air to get it. Our letters in which we have expressed our views about calling Padma back to the Ashram seem to have crossed. It seems she, too, wishes to return. Ascertain the views of Sitla Sahai and Sarojinidevi and do what is necessary. Jamna should either return to Bombay or select one of the places from Bardoli, Sasvane, Chorwad, Porbandar, Veraval, Mangarol, Ghogha and Gopanath. I think the fact that Bombay suited Jamna means only that sea-air suited her. If this inference is incorrect we shall know through experience. Any of the places which I think will suit Jamna will, I believe, suit Tilakam too. I knew of course from the very beginning that the expense on account of Krishnamaiyadevi, Padma and Radha was beyond the means of the Ashram, but, as we have tolerated many other improper things, my mind tolerates this expense too. I do feel ashamed of it, of course. I shall await a report from you of the views expressed on the issues raised by the question of *lezim*[1] exercises and the final decision arrived at. The person who exercised his influence on behalf of Chandrakanta has not done her good. If there are any important letters from abroad, which you think should be sent to me, make copies of them and send them to me. The rest need not be sent. If any correspondents have asked for autographs [inform them that] they cannot be sent. I have not yet received the bottle containing the preparation of almonds and dates. I think I know now how to make it.

I am informed by the jail authorities that Kaka, Narahari, Prabhudas and Manibehn keep good health. I have received no letter from them.

Silence Day, April 18, 1932

I got a letter from Mahavir[2] directly. I have written to him and told him that he should send a budget of the likely expendi-

[1] A short wooden device with jingling metal discs attached, used in rhythmic physical culture exercises and drills

[2] Mahavir Giri; *vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 21/22-4-1932.

ture and fix the last date up to which he will stay. I have asked him, in deciding this, to remember that our means are limited.

It seems that Nimu and the children do not keep good health in Lakhtar. I, therefore, think that it will be better if you call them back there. It seems the children find the heat at Lakhtar too much. Compared to Lakhtar, Sabarmati is certainly cool. If they prefer Vijapur, she may go and stay there. But even if you feel that she should stay at some place other than the Ashram, I think you will be able to decide finally only after she returns there.

Like the thumb of the right hand, the elbow of the left hand too pains. The doctor, therefore, has advised me to give rest to the left hand. I have not felt any pain so far when drawing the thread with the left hand. It is other movements which cause the pain. As a precaution, however, from yesterday I have started using the right hand to rotate the wheel and the left hand to draw the thread. Thus working the wheel with the left hand, I spun 95 rounds yesterday in three and a half hours and 85 rounds today in two and a half hours. There is no difficulty of a mechanical nature in making the necessary change in the Gandiva wheel for this purpose. All that is necessary is to remove the spindle to the other side and fix the wheel on the left hand side. What effect this change will have on the [left] hand will be known only after some time. I had been spinning 375 rounds every day in the week, and I had wanted to keep that up. But I have had to give up my intention for the present. If, however, I get used to spinning with the left hand, that will be no small advantage. I therefore do not feel unhappy about the rounds spun being so few. My purpose in mentioning this is to induce people there who may have sufficient enthusiasm to learn to use their left hand as much as they do the right. In Japan, the people are taught from their very childhood to use both the hands equally well. This practice will give nearly if not exactly twice as much advantage as we have now. If our left hand gives as good service as the right, the latter will get proper rest every day, and if the right hand ever becomes disabled we would be able to do all the work with our left hand. This is no small advantage. If this suggestion appeals to anybody there, he or she should start using the left hand to do some of the work which we normally do with the right hand. The activities which immediately come to my mind in this connection are writing, spinning and eating. If, however, we think a little about the matter, we shall be able to think of many things which we normally do with our right hand and which we can, with a little reflection and without much effort, train our left hand to do.

The stock of cotton with me is about to be exhausted. If, therefore, you have some cotton of good quality, please send two pounds of it. There are in all 39 letters today, besides this letter to you and "Watching the Heavens–II"[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8220. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

387. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

April 18, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

Since we ourselves are a democratic people, it is natural that our temperament should draw us towards a democracy. But as lovers of truth it is our duty to see justice and support the party which has justice on its side.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 9039. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

388. A LETTER

April 18, 1932

CHI.,

Woman's special virtues are non-violence, patience, forbearance, capacity for endurance and purity of heart. Dreams are signs of poor sleep. They may be caused by indigestion or too much of thinking. We can prevent them by discovering their cause.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9029. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

389. A LETTER

April 18, 1932

CHI.,

We see ignorance all around us. We should not feel depressed on that account, but should try to get rid of our own ignorance. If we do that, the ignorance of other people also will probably disappear. Ignorance means ignorance of one's duty, or disinclination to do one's duty even when one knows what it is.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9030. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

390. A LETTER

April 18, 1932

CHI.,

When a sister ties the *rakhi* round the wrist of her brother, she expresses her wish for his welfare and her desire that, when an occasion arises, he should help her. A person round whose wrist a woman ties the *rakhi* for ever remains her brother. The brother binds himself to help the sister even at the cost of his life.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9035. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

391. A LETTER

April 18, 1932

CHI.,

If ever our sister or any helpless person is assaulted by someone, we should try to save her even at the cost of our life. Whenever one can kill, one can also lay down one's own life instead. If, however, we do not have the strength to lay down our life, we should help even by using violence. Such violence does not cease

to be violence. It remains an evil. But cowardice is worse than violence.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9037. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

392. A LETTER

April 18, 1932

CHI.,

To cure bleeding from the nostrils, one should put a mud-pack on the top of the head at noon every day. Next, every morning and evening one should draw in cold water through the nostrils and throw it out *via* the mouth. It is easy to learn to draw in water through the nostrils. One should not go out too much in the sun, or let the head become hot. You should not believe that everything you read in a book is necessarily true. Experience has proved that it is best to eat before seven in the evening.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9038. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

393. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

April 18, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

You certainly wrote a fine poem for Vimal. After all you are a father and do love him, and it is right that you should. I do not believe that he does not take interest in study. In a proper atmosphere, children learn spontaneously. I have often found that they learn more outside the class-room than inside it. It is our duty, therefore, to create the school atmosphere even at home so that the children may spontaneously go on learning all the time what they can. This is the true Montessori method. But this means that all the grown-up members should behave as teachers, that is, should have purity of character and should love the children. This does not mean that we should close our schools, but it certainly means that we should, as quickly as we can, make the whole atmosphere of the Ashram like that of a school, and that all the grown-up men and women should regard themselves as the chil-

dren's guardians and make themselves fit to be so. If we do this, the children will no longer feel the hours in the class-rooms boring.

You should not include for reading *Saket* and *Anagh* just because I have made that suggestion. You may do so only if you like the suggestion and feel that some at least in the Ashram will appreciate it.

1. You may give the children some work to be done outside the class-room.

2. When you go for a walk, sometimes being alone may be good for you, sometimes talking and sometimes reading and teaching, depending upon your mood at the time. You should follow your inclination.

3. All persons who deserve to be looked upon as our parents or gurus are also worthy of being revered as good.

4. Anybody who joins the Ashram should follow only the rules of the Ashram, since even the best inmates are imperfect and, therefore, their actions should not be taken as examples to be followed. It is, after all, in human nature that persons who are eager to follow rules will spontaneously be drawn to those who observe them most scrupulously.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7494. Also C.W. 4971. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

394. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

April 18, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

Anybody who expects a letter from me regularly should himself or herself be regular in writing to me. What am I to write about, every week, unless the person writes something?

If Kusum continues to be ill, she should be forced to take rest. I am afraid she will not recoup her health unless she takes rest. I also will write to her.

It is now clear that the Sabarmati climate does not agree with you. This means that you should not live in Sabarmati for any length of time. You should not feel sorry at this, as it is not the particular plot of land that makes the Ashram. Your training in the Ashram will have borne fruit if you observe all its rules wherever you live. If you have been scrupulously observing the

rules in Bombay, there must have been a considerable effect on the environment there. I will write some time about the importance of observing the rules.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 851. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

395. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

April 18, 1932

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter. I cannot ask you to come here just now. Correspondence is going on for permission to see friends. If the matter is satisfactorily settled, I will certainly ask you to come. I have started the massage in the manner recommended by you. It is being done with an oil I have, named *Lakshadi* oil. I will let you know the result. I hope Andrews's health is all right.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6599

396. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

April 18, 1932

CHI. MANI,

There is no cause for worrying about Narahari. I have had official information that his health is good. I am trying to get a letter written by himself. A person who has put his or her whole trust in God, why should he or she carry the load of worry?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5966. Also C.W. 3283. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

397. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

April 18, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

Our spiritual progress will remain illusory till we learn to regard every person as our own brother or sister. Why should we feel any difference between relations and others? How should people who have no relations behave? Or those who have lost theirs through death? He who regards all human beings as his relations is never bereft of them, for they are [count][1]less. Such relationship is the only true one, and all other relationships are false and transitory. Can you understand this?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9472. Also C.W. 9033. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

398. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

April 18, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

If swaraj were to mean Gandhi's rule, it would be a curse. Swaraj means the rule of all, and that would include Pushpa too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3986. Also C.W. 32. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

[1] The source is mutilated here.

399. LETTER TO PADMA

April 18, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I don't know who is there in Bhawali at present. Nor do I know who are still free. You can go to Bhawali only if you have cultivated some contacts there. But personally I would also like it if you now returned to the Ashram. We should trust to our fate. What does Sarojinidevi desire? It will also be necessary to know what Sitala Sahay desires. I remember to have replied to every letter of yours that I got. It is you who have not been regular in writing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6131. Also C.W. 3483. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

400. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 18, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

You were certainly not in a mood to write when you wrote that letter. It was as long as your letters usually are, but it seemed to be incoherent. Just as one should not eat when one is not hungry or go out for a walk when one does not feel like it, similarly one should not write a letter when one is not in a mood to write one. Or, you may say merely that you are tired and do not wish to write, and stop there.

It is not a good sign that the end of the day finds you irritable rather than cheerful. This is no evidence of a spirit of non-attachment. I advise you, nay urge you, to reduce your responsibilities. That will do no harm either to you or to the Ashram. Only work which is done with a cheerful mind bears fruit.

I see the co-workers here every fortnight, and this time I had asked Dhurandhar to come with the others. He keeps good health. He has lost some weight, for he takes the diet prescribed for 'C'-class prisoners. You will be permitted to visit him now, provided no one has visited him meanwhile.

I hope you wrote what you did about the questions arising from *lezim* exercises without giving careful thought to the subject. You don't know where the doctrine of "art for art's sake" leads a person. In its name, young men in the West have in this age descended right into hell. Perhaps you didn't have a clear idea of what art means when you wrote the letter. But, then, you yourself have warned me that there will be no sense or logic in your letter. I will not, therefore, dwell further on this subject.

It is possible that you do not appear hysterical to yourself. Kisan may also not see that you are so. Or it may be that neither of you has understood the meaning of 'hysterical'. Perhaps you have never consulted a dictionary to find out. Don't take it for granted that our M.A.s know English. Moreover, very few people know the meanings of such technical terms. You are a fine specimen of a hysterical woman. Being hysterical is not necessarily a defect of character. It is desirable, however, to overcome this tendency sooner or later. But I will not lead you into a discussion of this subject. I don't mind your thinking that you are not hysterical. Since you always wish to do what seems right to you, I don't worry about the matter. "No one striving to follow good ever comes to harm."[1]

Your statement was that it was the special excellence of the Ashram that no one in it who took up some work left it off. I would regard that as a certificate. Maybe the Ashram does not deserve it today, but we should certainly aspire to deserve it one day. I am not unhappy about our failures. I am aware of them and, therefore, I am vigilant. The fact that we get no time to learn what we had wished to learn is only evidence of my shortcomings. My organizing ability and my ability to teach are limited, and my sense of proportion in regard to time is also limited; nonetheless, if circumstances had not kept me away from the Ashram for much of the time, I would have somehow managed to fulfil most of the programme. I say this from experience. But we should think about the past only with a view to improving things in future if we can. All of you should apply your minds and see if you can organize things and do what I have failed to do. Find some time and think over what we had planned to do, what remains undone and how much of it can still be carried out. Try to do whatever can be done. If you think that nothing can be done, forget what cannot be helped. We should not go on worrying about the matter.

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 40

To become a cipher means to shed the feeling, 'I am doing this'. There is no suggestion of pessimism in this.

Mahadev and I may claim to have done twice the normal amount of work during this Week. This time, Sardar has not yet been inspired to take up spinning. But all three of us had fasted[1].

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10281. Also C.W. 6729. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

401. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI[2]

April 18, 1932

CHI.,

1. I have never seen any difference between the Jain doctrine and the general Vedic doctrine. The difference is only one of point of view. The God of the Vedas is both a Doer and a non-Doer. Since the whole world is pervaded by God, He is a Doer, and yet He is not that because He remains untouched. He does not suffer the consequences of karma, since the world is not His karma in the sense in which we use the word. Looked at from this point of view, the verses which you have quoted from the *Gita* can be reconciled with one another. We should remember that the *Gita* is a poem. God does not speak nor does He do anything. We cannot say that God said anything to Arjuna. The conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna is imaginary. I at any rate do not believe that such a conversation took place between a real Krishna and a real Arjuna. But there is nothing inappropriate or untruthful in the method adopted by the *Gita*. It was a custom in those times to write religious works in such a form, and even today a learned writer would not be criticized for adopting a similar form. Jainism stated the truth logically and unpoetically and, therefore, coldly, and said that there was no God

[1] On the 6th and 13th, the first and the last day of the National Week

[2] The addressee had put the following questions to Gandhiji:

(i) What is the difference between the *Gita's* theism and the Jain doctrine that there is no God?

(ii) If action cannot be attributed to God, who bestows grace? If a person following the path of devotion does not or cannot believe in Divine grace, what else can sustain his faith? Is prayer anything more than an expression of a man's pious wishes?

(iii) What is the exact meaning of your statement, "Truth is God"?

who might be described as Creator of the world. It is not wrong to say this, but the ordinary mass of people do not respond to cold logic. They always crave for poetry. That is why even the rationalism of the Jains felt the need for temples, images and similar aids, for which pure *nyaya*[1] should have no use.

2. The answer to your second question is contained in the answer to the first, as the question itself, I think, is contained in the first question. The word 'grace' is a poetic term. *Bhakti* itself is poetry. But poetry is not an unworthy or inferior or superfluous thing. It is a very essential factor. That water is composed of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen is a factual statement, but to describe water as a gift of God is poetry. It is essential for a full life that we should feel in this poetic way, but it is not essential that we should know the scientific truth about the composition of water. Similarly, it is perfect logic to say that everything that happens is the effect of karma. But the true nature of karma is an unfathomable mystery. We mortals are so utterly ignorant that we cannot know all the karmas which are the cause of even the most ordinary event. It is, therefore, true to say that everything happens through the grace of God. Really speaking, that is the perfect truth. Moreover, the *atman* dwelling in a body is imprisoned in it like the air in a jar, and, as that air cannot use its natural power so long as it believes itself unconnected with the air outside, so the *atman* imprisoned in a body remains cut off from the power of omnipotent God so long as it believes itself the doer of things. For this reason, too, it is only when we say that everything which happens is done by God that we speak the perfect truth as befits a satyagrahi. The desires of a votary of truth are good and, therefore, they are always fulfilled. Accordingly, our prayers consisting of the verses which you have quoted[2] are bound to benefit the world also in the measure in which our prayers are sincere. The world is not separate from us or we from the world. All are connected with one another in their inmost essence and the actions of each have effects on all others. Actions here include thoughts also. Hence not a single thought is without its effect. That is why we must cultivate the habit of thinking good thoughts.

3. I was not led to the conclusion that Truth is God by considering that God is formless and so is Truth. But I saw that Truth is the only perfect description of God. All other descriptions are

[1] Logic; for Gandhiji's explanation of his meaning here, *vide* "Letter to Purushottam Gandhi", 12-5-1932.

[2] The C.W. source has "*Samastah sukhino bhavantu*" (May all be happy).

imperfect. Even the word 'Ishvar'[1] is a descriptive term, applied to an omnipotent something which cannot be described by human speech. If we think of the etymological meaning of the word 'Ishvar', the word does not touch our heart. Thinking of God as a ruler does not satisfy our mind. It may produce a kind of fear in us, which deters us from sin and impels us to be virtuous. But virtuous actions inspired by fear cease to be virtuous. If we act virtuously, we should do so through love of virtue and not through expectation of any reward. These and similar reflections resulted one day in my realizing that the statement that God is Truth is also imperfect. The statement that Truth itself is God is a perfect statement as far as human speech can express anything perfectly. We shall come to the same conclusion if we consider the etymological meaning of the word '*satya*'. It is derived from the root '*sat*', which means to exist eternally. That which exists eternally is *satya*, Truth, it can be nothing else. But belief in Truth as God should not diminish our faith, on the contrary, it should increase it. That at any rate has been my experience. By regarding Truth as God, we save ourselves from many a pitfall. We no longer desire to see miracles or hear about them. We may find difficulty in understanding what 'seeing God' means; there can be no difficulty in understanding the meaning of 'seeing Truth'. Seeing Truth may itself be difficult, it is so. But as we go nearer and nearer towards It, we can have an increasingly clearer vision of Truth that is God, and that strengthens our hope and faith that one day we shall have a full vision of It.[2] You can ask me again if you do not find your questions answered by this. I will not be tired of answering your questions. And I am confident that we shall find a satisfactory answer. Maybe this fails to answer all the doubts that may arise in your mind; in that case you may ask me again and again.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 105-7. Also C.W. 9044. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Literally, 'ruler'
[2] What follows is from the C.W. source.

402. A LETTER

April 19, 1932

MY DEAR,

We are all sons of *rishis* and there should be no pride of priestly or any other class. Priests are servants, voluntarily, of the people, and so are Kshatriyas. And to keep up one's vow is the duty not merely of the priest and the warrior but of all mankind. Therefore I should have respected your vow taken with deliberation and in a worthy manner without regard to your class. But if you will respect your vow [you] must surround it with all the protection it needs, i.e., you must take all the rest that your system requires so that your vow may not be discredited and so that it may not be unduly tried. Your decision not to draw anything save for your absolute necessity is quite good.

Love.

BAPU

C.W. 9041. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

403. LETTER TO SURENDRAJI

April 19, 1932

Your letter did not require immediate reply, and I also thought that as a prisoner I should keep myself within proper limits. Hence I delayed replying to you. I have completely forgotten what you had said in your previous letter (written to me when I was in England). You should never hesitate to write to me anything you think about me. It would be a weakness in you to feel such hesitation. If friends and co-workers put before me their criticism whenever they think that I am committing an error, I would learn much from it, because there would be no malice in their criticism. Moreover, if we are displeased with anything which a friend may have done, it is a test of our friendship and love for him to tell him immediately what has displeased us. Love is not love if it hesitates to speak out through consideration for the feelings of the person loved.

In the statement, "true *brahmacharya* is that which remains inviolate in any condition"[1], the word 'condition' should be understood comprehensively. That is true *brahmacharya* which does not succumb to any temptation or allurement. If a beautiful young woman makes advances to the stone image of a man, there will be no effect on the latter. A man is a true *brahmachari* if, in similar circumstances, he remains like a stone. And that image neither hears with its ears nor sees with its eyes. Similarly, a man also should not go seeking temptations. Anybody who does that is not a *brahmachari*. A *brahmachari* should not knowingly do anything which may be regarded as a sign of lust. But your chief contention is this, that the sight and company of women are found in experience to be inimical to self-control and must, therefore, be avoided. This reasoning seems wrong to me.

That is not true self-control or *brahmacharya* which can be preserved only by avoiding even such association with women as may occur in the ordinary course and is necessitated by our work of service. It is only outward renunciation uninspired by genuine desirelessness. The suppressed craving is bound to break through when it gets a suitable opportunity. Scripture tells us that our pleasure in sense-objects does not disappear completely till we have had a vision of the Supreme.[2] But the converse is equally true. Till our pleasure in sense-objects has disappeared completely, we cannot see the Supreme. In other words, our progress in regard to both is simultaneous. The meaning of the last statement should be carefully understood. Our pleasure in sense-objects does indeed disappear only after we have had a vision of the Supreme. That is, though our cravings may have subsided, our instinctive pleasure in sense-objects will have survived somewhere deep in us and, therefore, till we have seen the Supreme there will always be a possibility of the cravings being aroused again. After the vision of the Supreme, there can be no cravings whatsoever. That means that such a man loses the consciousness of sex and becomes sexless. That is to say, he ceases to be a figure and becomes a cipher, in other words, loses his self in God. When craving has ceased altogether, there can be no pleasure in sense-objects. I think this is easy enough to understand. If in this discussion we substitute the word 'Truth' wherever the words 'Supreme', 'God', 'Brahman', 'Parabrahman', etc., occur, the argument will be clear and it will also be easy to understand the meaning of realization.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Surendraji", p. 268.

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 59

Self-deception will not avail anybody here. Those in the Ashram who, under the pretext of living according to the ideal of the Ashram being one family, gratify their lustful fancies mentally are the hypocrites of Chapter III [of the *Gita*]. Here we are talking about persons who scrupulously follow Truth and are considering how they should behave. Hence, even if ninety-nine per cent of the inmates of the Ashram act as above, so long as the remaining one per cent sincerely try to live according to our ideal of the Ashram being one family, the aim of the Ashram will have been fulfilled and the manner of life which we have deliberately adopted in it will be justified. We need not, therefore, think what others do, but consider only what is possible for ourselves. But, at the same time, we should also take care not to imitate others without regard to our own limitations.[1] Others may claim that they can live freely according to the ideal of our being one family, but we ourselves, if we feel that we do not have such strength, should avoid physical contact with women inmates without disputing the claim of those others. We are carrying on a new and dangerous experiment in the Ashram. Those who can join it without violating Truth may do so, and those who cannot may keep away from it. We do not regard it as everybody's duty to mix freely with the women inmates. All that we do is to permit such freedom. Those members who can take it without violating dharma may do so, but those who are afraid of violating dharma by such freedom may, even though they live in the Ashram, keep themselves miles away from the company of women. One inmate of the Ashram may be able to treat . . .[2] as his daughter. But another inmate may not be able to cultivate such a feeling towards her, though he wishes that he could. It would then be his duty not to be free with her. In this connection I have given the illustration of a corpse. If you feel that it is wrong to imagine such a case even as an illustration, you may suppose 'A' and 'B' instead. If 'C' cannot feel towards 'B' as 'A' does, it is the moral duty of 'C', so long as he lives in the Ashram, never to touch 'B'. I have tried to enforce this rule in all cases in which I came to know the truth.

You should forget what happened about the chair. No importance need be attached to it. You are a sincere seeker, and, therefore, the ultimate result will assuredly be good. So long as one has got reason, one is bound to use it. It is not at all necessary to smother it. You may commit errors, but you will learn

[1] Literally, 'pull down our humble cottage on seeing another's palace'
[2] The name is omitted in the source.

through them and some day you will make experiments which will prove beneficial. And it is not as if all your experiments suggested by your reason fail. What does it matter if five such experiments in a hundred fail? All of us have a right to make mistakes. Whenever we realize that we have made a mistake, we shall start afresh and go forward.

I do not remember on what occasion I made it but the statement that a person who observes the vow [of *brahmacharya*] can render greater service to women is perfectly true. And there can be no question that I must have served them better in the measure in which I have succeeded in my effort to observe it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 108-10

404. LETTER TO NRISIMHAPRASAD K. BHATT

April 20, 1932

My fear has come true. You have seen a discrepancy between my advice to you and the fact that I myself toured the country to collect money for the service of the poor. I was afraid that you would do so. I, however, see no such discrepancy. I did not feel any inconsistency with my views in this matter even when I started on my tour. The difference between our two cases is this. Dakshinamurti is your institution, as the Ashram is mine. Your duty towards it is not to go out collecting money for it, but to teach and pour your soul into the pupils. Similarly, my duty towards the Ashram is not to collect money for it but to observe its vows and help the other inmates to observe them, and to help in carrying on the various activities of the Ashram with greater vigour. I must have faith that, if I do this duty, we shall get the money that we need. The principle regarding the collection of a fund for the poor should be the opposite of this. In that case my chief aim was to raise a fund. You cannot go out to collect money for Dakshinamurti, but friends may certainly approach people for help to your institution. It is their duty to do so. Do you now see the difference between the two cases? And this is not a new kind of difference, nor have I thought of it recently. I bore this distinction in mind even in South Africa. That is, when I realized it, I stopped seeking help for Phœnix, but I begged from door to door for a public institution there. I, therefore, still suggest that you should resolve, if not immediately, as soon as may be, that you will not go out to collect money for the institution. You

should write to all friends who have been helping the institution and whom you know personally, and inform them of your decision, and then let the events take their own course. The argument that our people do not yet appreciate institutions like yours and do not realize that it is their duty to give help to them on their own, is only a half truth. We who manage such institutions lack faith in our work, and, therefore, the people have not been rightly educated about their duty of providing funds for them. This is a vicious circle. The people remain ignorant of their duty because we have not tried to educate them about it; and till they learn to give money on their own, we go begging from door to door. Things will never change in this way. The people will not learn their duty and we shall not acquire faith in our work. And the result will be that all our labour will be wasted. Some of us, therefore, should risk everything and follow the way of faith. You are in every respect qualified to take such a risk. Your institution is relatively an old one and has acquired a reputation for itself. Some of your teachers are selfless workers, and the pupils are taught with love. We have evidence of this in the fact that you have succeeded in training some pupils by your method and that you have friends who give monetary help regularly. Hence, even from the practical point of view, my advice does not seem unsound. According to me, absolute faith in one's work is also the highest practical wisdom.

Why do you suppose that, if you raise your fees and become self-supporting, only the rich will send their children to your institution? You must be admitting some children free. You should pass on that burden to the rich. They will pay, and must pay, that tax if they want their children to be educated in your institution. Why do you entertain any doubt about the value to the people of the education which you impart? Personally I am firmly of the view, and my view is based on actual observation, that even our best institutions do not grow to their full capacity because their heads spend much of their time in begging money for them. The head of a school should devote himself exclusively to the internal development of the institution. Instead, I have seen heads wasting their valuable time in collecting funds. Personally I feel that in doing so those heads betrayed ignorance of their real duty. They did not have faith in teaching as a vocation. We see the result. You and all the teachers should meet once among yourselves, and then again in the presence of the friends who have been providing you with funds. Make your resolution at that meeting. The meeting should be called not to seek the

advice of those friends but to make your resolution and announce it. Faith does not wait for anybody's advice, and if you wait for advice you will stand to lose.

I stop here today. If you wish to differ from me on this issue again, you may do so. If you can spare time to write to me, I certainly have enough time to reply. I cannot get so much time when I am outside. You should, therefore, take the fullest advantage of my wider knowledge and experience. If you fail to do so, you will be the loser. I do not hesitate in the least or feel the slightest embarrassment in claiming that I am something of an expert in this matter. It is for you to accept or reject my claim. But just as a man who knows a cure for snake-bite but doubts or hides his ability would be a great fool, so also, if I know my special ability and still hide it from others I would be as good a fool as he. I would not knowingly wish to become one.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 112-4

405. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

April 21, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE[1],

Major Bhandari has read to me the reply received from Government to my letter[2] of the 13th April addressed to Major Martin regarding, among other things, an illustrative list[3] I had submitted of non-political associates who might visit me. In continuation of that correspondence I now submit as full a list of names of non-political associates as I can think of. I have given a brief description of the persons mentioned in the list. On the contrary I have confined myself to those whom I may wish to see in the near future. These are in no sense political people. I, therefore, suggest that when I want to see others outside the list, the Superintendent may be permitted to decide whether they come within the prescribed limits or not. For I find that if each case not mentioned in the list has to be submitted to Govern-

[1] Inspector-General of Prisons, Bombay Presidency

[2] *Vide* pp. 304-5.

[3] Not traceable

ment, the delay caused in receiving the reply is likely to defeat the very object of my application.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[ENCLOSURE]

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF NON-POLITICAL ASSOCIATES

1. Indira Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, 14 years old and studying in Mr. Vakil's School in Poona.
2. Jehangir Vakil and his wife, educationist, conducting a model school in Poona where Indira Nehru is studying.
3. Hemprabha Devi, wife of Babu Satischandra Das Gupta, purely devoted to khadi work at Sodepur (Bengal).
4. Raihana Tyabji, daughter of Mr. Abbas Tyabji, a permanent invalid.
5. Hiralal Shah, merchant, residing in Bombay, given to astronomical pursuits.
6. Damodardas Kanji, private gentleman in Bombay, holding intimate contact with the Ashram.
7. Karamchand Chunilal, share-broker in Bombay.
8. Hirewanti Mansukhlal, widow of the late Mr. Mansukhlal Chunilal, a philanthropist.
9. Nargis Captain, an invalid, widow of the late Mr. Captain of the Indian Postal Service.
10. Ramabehn, student of Gujarat Vidyapith, daughter of Sheth Ranchhodlal Amritlal of Ahmedabad.
11. Prabhashankar Parekh, private gentleman of Rajkot, father of an Ashram girl.
12. Behram Khambhatta and Tehmina Khambhatta, an osteologist of Bombay and his wife.
13. Manjukesha Mashruwala, niece of a member of the Ashram and in charge of a charitable dispensary.
14. Sushilakumari, student, Medical College, Delhi, sister of Sjt. Pyarelal of the Ashram.

[1] In his reply dated April 23, Doyle wrote: "I have submitted to Government the further list of non-political associates whom you may desire to see and have also asked for a decision on your suggestion that the Superintendent be permitted to decide whether others outside the list may visit you or no. I shall communicate to you the orders of Government as soon as they are received."

15. Sushilakumari, school mistress, Girls' School, Rajkot.
16. Dinkar Mehta, an invalid student of the Vidyapith, under treatment of Dr. Muthu.
17. Puratan Buch, an invalid student of the Vidyapith.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Pt. I, p. 187

406. LETTER TO PREMLILA THACKERSEY

April 21, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I got the cotton and the honey yesterday. May I thank you? The cotton seems to have been carded in a mill. You probably know that it can be of no use to me. May I remind you of what I said last year? I had hoped then that you would stock good, hand-ginned cotton, get it carded at your place and give it to people to spin. I wanted you to send me some from such stock of cotton, or if you did not have it, to obtain some from a khadi store. It seems that the people in the office here could not explain this to you properly. Send me such cotton immediately if you can secure it.

I was asked to give a list of persons other than inmates of the Ashram whom I should like to meet. I had sent a few such names, which included yours also. The government has replied that you can come to see me. You may, therefore, now come along with a party from the Ashram or by yourself whenever you wish to.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4822. Courtesy: Premlila Thackersey

407. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 21/22, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I get your post regularly on Wednesday every week. I got it yesterday too. The results of the spinning competition were excellent. I had certainly guessed that your speed would be very high, but the speeds reached by the others, too, are very good. I should be happier if all this makes a difference in the total output.

The pain in my left elbow is of the same kind as in the right-hand thumb, and the doctor has been advising me for some time that I should give up spinning for a few days and give complete rest to the elbow. I told you about this in my last letter. At the moment, all that I can say is that my experiment is continuing. I can draw yarn with the right hand with fairly good ease. It is too early yet to say whether this will cure the pain in the elbow completely. However, there is no cause at all for worry. I shall give you definite information on Tuesday when I seal the letters in a packet. I have started dictating this letter on Thursday.

I was glad that Mathuradas came and saw me. It would be a good thing if Tilakam goes to Calicut, but we should not send him at our own risk unless somebody there offers to take care of him and treat him well. As regards Amtul, I am writing to her. Read that letter[1]. I told you in my previous letter what I wrote in reply to the letter[2] I had from Darjeeling. You may come here whenever you wish to. You will be able to see those women whom the previous visitors did not see.

I have been trying to do for Kaka everything I can from here.

Use Soniramji's money as you think proper. It should certainly be used for supplying free copies of the *Gita* whenever you think it justified.

The person who stole things from your room must have known what it contained. I cannot resist the temptation of saying that Jamna deserved the lesson. Nobody should keep a single pice in his or her room. Anything one has should be deposited in the safe of the Ashram and that, too, only when the person has no other alternative. Except for books, a few spinning-wheels and such other articles necessary for our work, we should have nothing in our rooms. Even the clothes should be the minimum we require for our daily use. As a rich man feels happier the longer the list of his possessions, we should feel happier the shorter it is.

Our ideal is to have no possessions worth keeping a record of. So long as we continue to possess things, our burglar friends are bound to claim their share. Since we do not voluntarily offer it, they seize it by force.

You will of course read the letter which I am going to write to Kusum. It would certainly be good if she learns nursing. I

[1] *Vide* p. 343.
[2] From Mahavir Giri; *vide* pp. 317-8.

also believe that Mrs. Lazarus[1] will treat her well. But it seems to me that at present the work is beyond Kusum's strength. If she cannot preserve her own health, how will she be able to help others to preserve theirs? Nursing the sick imposes no small strain on one's strength. Sometimes a nurse has to be on duty the whole of the day and the night. And she is on her feet all the time. Most of the patients have little endurance. They are irritable and demand immediate attention. Hence anybody who is sincere in taking up this work must make her body and mind strong. Of course this is true only about a woman who wishes to be a devoted nurse. A nurse who doesn't care for her patients and whose heart is not in her work is a disgrace to her profession. A nurse's job, if done sincerely, is more arduous than a doctor's. Good doctors have always given credit to the nurses and claimed none for themselves. If Kusum has understood all this and if we can be sure that she can make her body strong enough for the work, I would certainly encourage her in her idea. Personally, I have always been of the view that a nurse should remain unmarried. The best nurses in the world are found among the followers of the Catholic Church, and that religion also supplies the largest number. All of them are required to remain unmarried. This is a special merit of the Catholic Church. Another noteworthy fact about it is that all teachers, from the primary to the highest level, are unmarried persons. We see very few other teachers who can excel them.

April 22, 1932

Dhiru had asked me in his letter whether he might send a Magan spinning-wheel or himself bring one, and I had replied to him and told him that he could send or bring one. How is it that it has not yet come? I thought about that spinning-wheel especially because of the pain in my elbow. Padma, too, has in her letter urged me to use that model, and so I am more keen about it today than I was when I wrote to Dhiru. If the spinning-wheel is ready, send it with anybody who may be coming to see me. If it reaches Bombay, even Dahyabhai will bring it. He comes every Saturday. I have already written to you in my previous letter asking you to send me some cotton.

Read the letter which I have written to Vinabehn in regard to Kusum. I need not write anything more. Manibehn will be released from the Belgaum jail on May 14. I had a letter from her, in which she says that Keshu had agreed to make a spinning-

[1] Matron at the Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital, Ahmedabad

wheel for her. If it is ready, ask him to send it to Dahyabhai in Bombay. If it is not ready, ask him to make it by and by and send it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8221. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

408. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

April 22, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

If you will turn up the file left by Major Martin, you will find I am referring to a matter that has been pending for some time. Kaka Kalelkar you know perhaps as well as I do. He is at present in the Belgaum Central Prison. He was transferred from Visapur to Belgaum. I have been trying to get accurate information about his health and that of three other companions, but beyond getting a little vague information after considerable delay I have been able to make no headway. In the reply Major Martin sent me just before he left, he said that he was asking for the information that I had sought. The information already received by Major Bhandari shows that Kakasaheb is weak. Probably he has lost weight and does not get cow's milk which he used to get here. Therefore if there are no political reasons to the contrary, I suggest his transfer to Yeravda, and if he can be put with me I should bring him up, I hope, to the weight he reached here in 1930, i.e., to 116 lb.

Of the other three prisoners referred to in my letter to Major Martin of 13th April, Narahari Parikh has nose trouble which often causes great pain. His wife Mrs. Parikh writes saying that she cannot even get acknowledgment from the Belgaum Prison although she has sent reply-paid postcards. She has not heard from her husband at all and naturally she is worrying. I have myself written to Kakasaheb inquiring not only about him but about the other three also, because they are all inmates of the Ashram, but I have no reply from him or them. I would like to have their personal letters if I may. I presume that the object of allowing me to hold correspondence with fellow-prisoners was to give me the human satisfaction that I need in the way of getting information from them as to their well being.

I know that you have only just arrived and must be very busy. I would not have worried you almost immediately on your arrival, but for the pressing necessity of the cases I have brought to your notice.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

409. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[*April 22, 1932*][2]

CHI. MIRA,

Your expected letter has just arrived. Like you I need not delay mine.

I am delighted that you have Kamaladevi with you and that she joins you at the morning prayer and sings *bhajans* in the evening.[3] Her vigorous skipping reminds me of the time when I used to skip for the same reason as Kamaladevi. I had taught the boys also. Ramdas was the gracefullest and best. It is certainly a fine exercise especially in winter.

It is good that you are continuing your saltless experiment and that it is agreeing with you.

We have here a new doctor. He is a Parsi Major. He loves his work and has the innate dignified courtesy that you see invariably associated with a cultured Parsi. He has been giving me electric massage for the right thumb and the left elbow. The elbow has been causing pain for some time, but only when I work in particular ways. He thinks that it may be necessary to stop spinning for some days. Having done double work during the National Week, so far as my output is concerned, it is now about 85 rounds per day. For I have anticipated Dr. Mehta by using the left hand for turning the wheel. This is my fourth day. I have made very good progress. The right hand draws much more steadily and the thread is finer and more uniform.

[1] For Doyle's reply, *vide* Appendix VI.

[2] "Superintendent's initialling date" —Mirabehn

[3] "Kamaladevi was imprisoned as a 'B'-class prisoner, and placed like other 'B'-class prisoners, amongst the 'C'-class prisoners in the Debtors' Prison. She and I began to take too much interest in the well being of the rest of the prisoners with the result that we were both removed to the permanent women's jail inside the big Arthur Road jail, where we were placed in one of three small barracks, which had a common verandah. The other barracks were occupied by female convicts." —Mirabehn

This additional practice with the left hand again makes me think of the necessity of our trying to use the left hand equally with the right. And we should teach the children[1] from now to be ambidexterous. I have already written about this to Narandas.

As a result of the two days' fast, I suppose, I have lost 2 lb. in weight. There is nothing in this loss, if I do not lose steadily. If I do, I shall go back to milk without the slightest hesitation. I have given you this information only by way of report. You must not brood over this loss of weight.

The history of the Ashram goes on, though slowly. In order to overtake the arrears of correspondence, I have suspended it for the past three days. I shall soon resume it.

Study of the heavens has come to stay. I have now a few books on it. This study puts me more in tune with the Infinite.

I won't need to card for spinning. Mahadev has already begun. He always cards more than he spins and this he does for me. The present stock being so regularly replenished is not likely ever to be exhausted.

Radha is largely to blame for her bad health. She broods too much, gives more time than necessary to external tidiness and does not give herself full rest as prescribed by medical men. I am not now inclined to press for Almora. We should learn the poor man's art of living. I know that I am the greatest hindrance in our march towards that ideal. You and the other survivors will have to re-arrange many things that, by my identification with them, have been or will be left as they should not be.

We are all keeping well except that Vallabhbhai's nose and constipation still worry him as before. Dr. Mehta is now dealing with both the disorders and hopes to produce some relief in a short time.

Whilst this was being written in the midst of interruptions, we saw from the newspapers received, that Kamaladevi had been transferred to Belgaum. A prisoner has no choice. His or her body is not in his or her own keeping.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6218. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9684

[1] "Ashram children" —Mirabehn

410. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 22, 1932

DAUGHTER AMTUL,

If I had time I should write to you in Urdu. Why don't you? Only you should write a clear hand. It will be good exercise for me. Have I spelt your name correctly?[1]

I have not yet got Doctor Sharma's books. I shall read them when I get them and tell you all about them.

For you, I am in correspondence with Narandas.[2] Of course you can go to the Ashram when you wish. What I feel is that you should live where you keep well. There are opportunities for service everywhere. A kind word spoken at the right moment is good service. Even a kind thought that would translate itself into action is good service. It is idolatry to think that there is no service but what is rendered through the body.

You should tell me how you pass your day. Do you keep your diary?

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 249

411. A LETTER

April 22, 1932

DEAR,

I think that you have erred in judging the people in the Ashram. It is very difficult for one person to say of another whether he or she has love or not. We know nothing of the struggles that go on in the human breast between the forces of good and evil. We are ready enough to see the defects of people but we are unable to know how many conquests they have made. What I say is not intended to signify that we are all perfect in the Ashram. Far from it. But I do want to say that one member has no right to judge another. It betrays want of charity. I have

[1] Gandhiji had written her name in Urdu.

[2] *Vide* pp. 251 and 300.

also noticed that those who are very exact in the performance of their own duty are often uncharitable to others, especially when they do not see them as assiduous as themselves. This is a grave defect and a hindrance in the path of one's progress. If we take care of ourselves, God will take care of the others, if they will not do so themselves.

Nor does my writing mean that you are mechanically to shut your eyes and ears to what may be going on in front of you. What I have suggested is in no sense a mechanical performance. It is a mental attitude which comes from training. Meanwhile wherever you notice lack of love, you must as gently as possible bring it to the notice of those in whom you detect the defect and if you have not got enough gentleness to do so you should bring it at least to the notice of Narandas and leave him to do what he likes.

Love.

BAPU

C.W. 9048. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

412. A LETTER

April 22, 1932

CHI.,

We do not take stray dogs under protection in the Ashram. If we start doing that, the Ashram would be full of them, and we would be so busy looking after them that we would forget our duty to human beings. The *mantra* which we recite before starting to eat is praise of God. We should offer thanks to God whenever we start doing something. As far as possible, we should not use goods imported even from China and Japan.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9052. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

413. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

April 22, 1932

CHI. MANU,

This time your handwriting was a little better, but you have still to improve it in many ways. Request someone to help you and do so. If Nanu does not let you read his letters, you should not try to snatch them from him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7427. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

414. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 22, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I have already written[1] to you about Dhurandhar. He has not gone on hunger-strike.

I think you should not force Anandi[2] to go out for a walk with you. If she has no strength, she will not be able to walk. It will be enough if you teach her *pranayama* and some passive exercises. Do you know what passive exercises are?

Regarding conversion, I don't mean that it is never justified. But no one should invite another person to change his or her religion. In my view, the belief which underlies such practice, namely, that one's own religion is true and another's false is an error. When, however, a person has changed his religion under compulsion or in ignorance, there should be no objection to such a person rectifying his error, that is, returning to his original religion; on the contrary, he should be encouraged to do that. His action is not conversion. If I think that my religion is false, I should give it up. And I may, I ought to, accept what seems to me good in any other religion. If my religion seems to me imperfect, it is my duty to try to make it perfect. It is also my duty to try to rid it of any evil which I may see in it.

[1] *Vide* p. 325.
[2] Lakshmidas Asar's youngest daughter

I regard Mirabehn as a Christian, and now she also regards herself as a Christian. I see no inconsistency in her being a Christian and reading the *Gita* with devotion. Persons belonging to other faiths also join in our prayers with sincere feeling.

I really don't know what we shall do after we get swaraj. God will lead me then, as He does today. A man who believes in God does not plan what he will do in future. He who plans is not a man of faith, or rather his faith is weak.

There are not three separate paths, knowledge, devotion and action, for the realization of God. The three form one single path. That one path is divided into three aspects for the sake of convenience [of discussion]. Water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen, but it is neither the one nor the other. Similarly, knowledge is not a self-sufficient path of God-realization, nor is devotion. It may be said that the path of God-realization is a chemical compound of all the three factors. This metaphor is defective, but it explains what I mean.

The protection of Draupadi's honour is not a miracle[1] like the conversion of water into wine. The faith that God succours his devotees when they are in distress helps one, and the examples which support such faith are worth cherishing. If, however, a person cultivates devotion in expectation of such help, his devotion is of no value.

I do not approve of a policy of compelling people to become strong. There should be no compulsion at all in this matter. I have not known anyone who liked to remain weak in body. This is a matter for education.

We should put before the people the ideal of reducing their needs to a minimum. Having done so, we need not concern ourselves with the result. Where is compromise in this? The question of compromise does not arise at all. The standard of life of the starving poor ought to be raised. But this is not a new idea. Even now we are making efforts towards that end.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10282. Also C.W. 6730. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] *St. John*, ii

415. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

April 22, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

Who helped you to write the letter in Gujarati? Whoever it was, his handwriting is excellent. I assume that the actual language was yours.

One may certainly enter into loving rivalry with a fellow-disciple of one's guru or with anybody else. That is, we can take everybody who can do something better than we as our ideal and advance. There should be no trace of envy in this. I have used the adjective 'loving' above to suggest this. In such rivalry, we should wish in our heart that the person whom we have accepted as our ideal will improve his skill day by day, so that the ideal which we seek to attain will always be rising higher as we progress. Such a wish will have a beneficial result for us too, since we shall be continually advancing.

I am firmly of the view, and it is my experience too, that, if a person has violated a moral principle in any one sphere of his life, his action will certainly have an effect in other spheres. In other words, the belief generally held that an immoral man may do no harm in the political sphere is quite wrong. And so is the other belief that a person who violates moral principles in his business may be moral in his private life or in his conduct in family affairs. Hence, whenever we do an evil we should overcome [the tendency towards] it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9437. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

416. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

April 22, 1932

DEAR RAIHANA,

I got your letter. Let Father rest for a few days. I hope that the work which requires him to stay there for some time is not anything very difficult. Many *salaams* and *vandemätarams* to him from all of us. Tell him also that I always pray to God that He may grant him a long life and enable him to render great services. Many *salaams* and *vandemätarams* to Mother too. I have got the Urdu books now. I copy out today a few passages from them.[1]

My Urdu handwriting will not improve till I practise writing in Urdu regularly. But how can I spare the time? Moreover, it is my left hand which I must train. Hence I content myself with what I am able to do. The progress is bound to be slow, but we cannot help it.

This time you gave me no news about Hamida and her friends. I must get some in the next letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9641

417. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

April 22, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

It is good to form the habit of having a bath before entering the kitchen. But the rule cannot be applied to a person who goes there to have a meal.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9425. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

[1] This paragraph is in Urdu. The passages copied out are not translated here.

418. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

April 22, 1932

BHAISHRI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter. I was glad that both of you could meet Andrews. I will trouble you and request you to come here if I can secure permission for you to see me, and then also only if the condition has not improved by that time. Both of us will go through the books on massage when we get them. I find that *Lakshadi* oil is excellent.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6600. Also C.W. 4386. Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

419. LETTER TO A GIRL

April [22][1], 1932

CHI.,

Under a father's rule, exploitation may go on and the poor suffer. A mother, on the other hand, would spin always for her poor children.[2] The sacred thread and the rosary may give some help in cultivating holiness. But they are not very useful today. A cow is looked upon as a mother because, like a mother, she gives milk. Moreover, a woman feeds her own children till they are one year of age, whereas the cow gives milk to all of us, and that is why she is our mother too. A mother receives much service from her children. But who does anything for a cow? Hence a cow is more of a mother.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 119. Also C.W. 9055. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] From the C.W. copy

[2] The addressee had asked Gandhiji the meaning of a Gujarati saying, to the effect that a child might not be as well cared for by his father even if the latter was a king, as by his mother even if she had to support herself by spinning.

420. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL[1]

April 22, 1932

CHI. MANI,

We were eagerly waiting for a letter from someone there, as people wait for the rains, when we received one or two . . .. See me here on your way when you are released. If it is Monday, stay on till the next day, Tuesday. Between 12 noon or 11.30 a.m. and 1 p.m. is the most convenient time when you can see me. If you come during this period, you will be able to see at least two of us. . . . All three of us are all right. . . .

I see that you have really tried to improve your handwriting. The result shows that anybody can improve his handwriting if he tries. This is true about everything.

To learn the *Gita* by heart also means that we should understand the meaning of every verse and pronounce the words correctly. Who teaches you the *Gita*? Perhaps you will tell me this only when we meet. But if there is time and if the jail authorities let you do so, write your last letter before you are released. As regards your health, we will issue a certificate only after seeing you. . . .

Yashoda and the boy visited us once. The boy climbed on to a chair and was so thoroughly pleased with himself that he left his new pair of shoes here. Fortunately for him or for Dahyabhai, some one of us noticed it and immediately sent it to him. Yashoda's health is none too good. Indeed she has not been well for many years. Dahyabhai comes every week and can see both of us.

Jivatram[2] is still out of prison and working. Devdas is in Gorakhpur [prison]. I have just had a letter from him. He is alone there but quite happy. He reads a good deal. Lakshmi is no longer 'poor Lakshmi'! She is still nursing Papa[3], but the latter is nearly restored to health. Rajaji is fine. He keeps good health. His companions also keep fairly good health. Indu[4] has

[1] According to the source, parts of the letter were censored by the jail authorities.

[2] J. B. Kripalani

[3] C. Rajagopalachari's elder daughter

[4] Indira Nehru

not yet come to see me. I do not know where she is at present. Most probably she is in Poona. Kamala[1] is in Prayagji. Kamalapati[2] seems to have some relief from his pleurisy, but still has slight fever.

I will write to someone in Ahmedabad about the spinning-wheel. But we can spare a good one even from here, if you want one. . . .

. . . I wrote my first letter to Ba only today, but I do get letters written by her. She and other women prisoners are all right. Mithubehn continues to conduct her class.

If your glasses are broken, you can get them changed even while in prison. But this is perhaps unnecessary now as the date of your release[3] is approaching.

Your letter was received here today and immediately given to me. The reply also is being written on the same day. I hope that it will be posted tomorrow. When you will get it depends on your luck and mine.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, pp. 81-3

421. A LETTER

April 23, 1932

CHI.,

It is not correct to say that Lord Krishna exhorted Arjuna to follow the way of violence. He only prevented him from doing a great evil in the name of non-violence. Arjuna had already committed violence when he assembled the army. He, therefore, had no other course open to him. He was not afraid of violence. But he did not wish to kill relations. He did not regard it as evil to fight other people.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9051. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

1 Kamala Nehru, wife of Jawaharlal Nehru
2 Literally, 'Kamala's husband', one of the names of Vishnu
3 She was released on May 15, 1932.

422. *A LETTER*

April 23, 1932

CHI.,

You did good work during the National Week.

The sound which you hear in your stomach while you are fasting is made by the movement of the gas.

In order to feel that all human beings are our relations, we should think constantly that all of us are created by one God.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9060. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

423. *A LETTER*

April 23, 1932

CHI.,

I would see no harm in boys and girls playing together if certain restraints are observed. I think they cannot play the game of *hututu*[1]. In this game, the players touch one another so frequently that impure feelings are likely to be aroused in some boy or girl. We should avoid that danger. We should know that, when grown-up boys and girls mix together in such fashion, impure feelings are likely to be aroused. We shall gain nothing by hiding this fact.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9061. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

424. *A LETTER*

April 23, 1932

CHI.,

One should certainly nurse a person who is sick, but cannot omit spinning for that reason. Nursing a sick person benefits only that person, whereas we spin for the sake of millions of the poor.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9067. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Also called '*kabaddi*'

425. *A LETTER*

April 23, 1932

CHI.,

Wearing the tuft of hair has little connection with dharma. The support of man's life is God. If a thing is indispensable, we may use it even if it is imported from abroad.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9068. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

426. *LETTER TO DUDABHAI DAFDA*

April 23, 1932

BHAI DUDABHAI[1],

I got your letter. My compliments to Sunderjibhai for his help. It seems you have attracted a good many pupils. I hope Danibehn[2] is all right now. I occasionally get news about Lakshmi[3].

Sardar and Mahadev are with me.

They send their regards to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 7757. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

427. *LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI*

April 23, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

If you have faith in yourself, my hopes in you will be realized.

You must have written to the Ashram for Gangabehn [Vaidya]'s powder and pills.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1835

[1] The first Harijan admitted by Gandhiji in the Ashram in 1917
[2] Addressee's wife
[3] Addressee's daughter, who was brought up by Gandhiji in the Ashram

428. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

April 23, 1932

CHI. MANI,

I got your letter. Do not worry about Narahari at all. I even hope to get permission for him to write to me. I got news about him this week also. There seems to be nothing wrong with his health. I have written a letter to him today. Still, if you wish to go to Belgaum, you may.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5967. Also C.W. 3284. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

429. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

April 23, 1932

CHI. MANGALA (DARLING),

You deserve compliments for standing second. Did you understand the idea that our bodies are things of little value? If you have understood this, the next step in the argument is easy. Is it not a great thing that God dwells even in such a worthless thing?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4085. Also C.W. 49. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

430. LETTER TO MOHAN N. PARIKH

April 23, 1932

CHI. MOHAN,

Your handwriting is good. You should become a good man, too. Uncle Mahadev is very well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9177

431. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

April 23, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

As far as possible, we should not use foreign goods at all. If, however, we refrain from using the goods of one particular country but use the same goods imported from another country, that does not necessarily imply violence. Ask Premabehn to explain this further to you.

If anyone is afraid that playing cards may tempt the players to start gambling, he or she should certainly not play. It can never be one's duty to play cards, and it may be too much if we forbid people to play. Those who can refrain from playing should not play.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9471. Also C.W. 9056. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

432. LETTER TO PURATAN BUCH

April 23, 1932

CHI. PURATAN,

Whatever spiritual growth has taken place in me is wholly the result of my worship of Truth. From that I have gained all other things. For the present, you should completely give up the thought of going to jail. Improve your health first.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9166

433. LETTER TO PADMA

April 23, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

As I should not write much with the left hand, this letter will not be long. However, I shall be able to say all I wish to. Personally, I think that you should go to the Ashram. But we should know what Ba and Sitala Sahay also think in the matter. I am now ready to spin on the Magan spinning-wheel. You have copied out quite useful instructions for spinning on it. Why did you take so much trouble? Anyway, I will now preserve that letter. Please remember that it is not one's body alone that can render service to others. You can also serve if you live a truly celibate life and become a very learned woman. They are born to no purpose who, though endowed with a strong body, do not use it for service. And the knowledge acquired by such persons also goes in vain. If you understand this, you will give up worrying and will recover your health more quickly. Blessings to Shantilal.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6132. Also C.W. 3484. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

434. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA N. KHARE

April 23, 1932

CHI. RAMBHAU,

The account which you have sent of your progress is good.

As one person may live in several houses one after another, so also there is nothing strange if he should dwell in different bodies one after another.

Who knows whether Rama did grieve[1] as much as he is said to have done, or whether he grieved at all? What we read is a poet's account. It is perfectly true that such grieving would not be seen in a man of spiritual knowledge. We should, therefore, believe that our ideal Rama would not have grieved in that manner.

You should regain the weight which you have lost.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 291. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

435. MESSAGE ON SACRED THREAD CEREMONY[2]

[Before *April 24, 1932*][3]

The sacred thread ceremony has lost its significance for me nowadays. Still, if the sacred thread ceremony is deemed essential, it should be performed only after the boy's attaining maturity. The sacred thread ceremony means entering new life and since then constant endeavour should be made to lead a life of self-control and service.

The Bombay Chronicle, 25-4-1932

[1] Over the abduction of Sita as described in the *Ramayana*

[2] Of the son of Mr. Mahulikar, formerly painting master in the Gujarat Vidyapith

[3] The messege was reported under the date-line: "Ahmedabad, April 24".

436. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL[1]

April 24, 1932

CHI.,

Mother India should possess the virtues of patience, capacity for endurance, forbearance, courage, non-violence, fearlessness, etc. One can cultivate them in the Ashram.

Do we remember every event in our present life?[2] If we did, we would become mad. After we have learnt the proper lesson from anything which we would like to remember, what harm is there if we forget it? On the contrary, it would be for our good.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 9053. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 119

437. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

April 24, 1932

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

It is less trouble to me to reply to a letter immediately I get it, if I have the time to do so. Writing will stop automatically when I can no longer use my hand. A wife can go where her husband does, but sometimes dharma indicates a different course. What is essential is to have patience. We should cheerfully do—learn to do—the duty which has come to us unsought. Why should a woman believe herself weak? Husband and wife are friends and equals of each other. A weak wife makes the husband also weak. Hence she should be strong even for his sake.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7428. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] The name of the addressee is not given in the sources; but in "Letter to Pushpa S. Patel", p. 266, Gandhiji refers to her having played the role of Mother India in a dramatic piece.

[2] The addressee had also asked why we cannot remember the events of former births.

438. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

April 24, 1932

CHI. DEVDAS,

You have proved your opinion of yourself to be wrong. For, your letter just received is, though not too short, not very long either. But it will do.

I used to get news of you, though I did not hear from you directly. It is good that you have got quiet there. It was necessary for you to get used to it. Since you are keeping good health, I do not worry on your account.

I certainly wish that you should master Urdu.

It is ten minutes to two now. Mahadev has come to me after finishing most of his own work, and, since I write very slowly with the left hand, I am now dictating this letter to him. My aim in asking you to complete your study of Urdu is that you should read Maulana Shibli's writings. He has written a biography of the Prophet and also anecdotes from the lives of his associates. There is much else too, with all of which I believe we should become acquainted. If you have sufficient enthusiasm, you should read all that. You can send for the books from Azamgarh, where his office and *madrasah* are. Most probably, you were with me during that tour and saw the place. The present incumbent of Maulana Shibli's religious office is Maulana Suleman Nadvi, since the former, as you must be aware, died some time ago.

I get quite good letters from Lakshmi. That is, she replies to mine as a matter of religious duty. Her letters are rather short. But she seems helpless. She admits that she cannot think of anything to write and so contents herself with a few sentences. However, whatever little she writes she writes beautifully, and her Hindi may be said to be quite good. She writes a pleasing hand and seems to be a quiet girl. But why need I describe her to you? I have given here, though, the impression she has made on me. She has been writing, it seems, to the Ashram inmates too.

We are happy here. We do not feel that we are in a jail. How can men be styled 'State prisoners' unless they enjoy complete freedom about food, sleep and all else? As for visitors, Dahyabhai comes every week and he sees both of us together; but Mahadev does not have our status and, therefore, cannot join us

at the interview. Occasionally someone comes from the Ashram too, and we two see the visitor. Durga and Jivanji came once and saw Mahadev. Now we have decided for the present that Durga should not come and unnecessarily spend money. However, she is free to change her mind if she wishes, as she has not taken a vow not to come.

This is our daily routine: All three of us get up at 3.45 a.m. After we have prayed together, Mahadev goes back to sleep and we two take honey and water and then have a walk. Afterwards I sleep for about a quarter of an hour. At 6.30 all the three have our breakfast consisting of bread, tea, etc., my tea of course being crushed almonds mixed in water. I like it and have so far not felt the want of milk. That is the only joint meal during the day. The other two who drink milk have their next meal at about mid-day, and I have mine at 4 p.m. In between, I eat dates and almonds. At 4 p.m. I eat some vegetables, bread and almonds. Mahadev has been doing a lot of spinning and carding, giving the spare time, if any, to reading. At present he has also to go through the proofs of the book being published by the Oxford Press. I take about two of his hours for my work. Owing to the pain in the hand, since the National Week I have been spinning with the left hand and drawing the thread with the right. I have had enough practice by now and experience no difficulty, though the speed has of course slowed down. Formerly I used to spin 375 rounds or more a week, but I cannot maintain a steady speed now. I rest satisfied with whatever I can spin in two to three hours. The highest number of rounds I have been able to draw so far with the right hand is 182. However, I feel confident that gradually the speed will increase. As for my reading, I could get Urdu readers here and am going through them. I read Ruskin also and give some time to books on astronomy too, as I have of late fallen in love with watching the stars. With all this, I also find time for a nap of 20 or 25 minutes during the day. I have started writing the history of the Ashram, having completed the remaining chapters of the *Gita*[1] some time ago. That is the account of time for us two. As Sardar suffers from some trouble in his nose, he remains content with reading newspapers mostly and reading out something from them to me. He reads a little from other things too, but he cannot read much as his nose begins running with the least strain. During this jail term, I do not generally ask for books from the

[1] *Vide* "Letters on the *Gita*", pp. 111-49.

Ashram. Friends have been sending me enough for me to live on. In fact they are too many already—over two hundred, as I guess. Not that all of them are worth reading. I liked very much Upton Sinclair's latest book which he sent me. In the form of a novel, it gives a very good account of the working of the American Prohibition Law. I am sending you the book, which is named *Wet Parade.* Others of his books are there in the Ashram, but I believe that this new book has probably not arrived there. Mahadev told me a story of how you lost some books. I was not surprised to hear it, as I think I know well enough your capacity for losing things. Pyarelal is in Dhulia jail, and Prabhudas is in Belgaum jail, where I hear that he is in very good health. He has put on two more pounds of weight. Kakasaheb is very weak. Jamnalalji, Vinoba, Gulzarilal, etc., are in Dhulia jail. Ramdas is here, and so also are Chhaganlal Joshi, Surendra, Mohanlal, Qureshi, etc. I am permitted to see them occasionally. Mathuradas is in Nasik jail. Taramati writes to me occasionally.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2154

439. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

April 24, 1932

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

Please write to me. Why do you remain ill? What is your diet? You should eat fruit in sufficient quantities. You ought to improve your health. You need not worry about Jamnalal or Kamalnayan or anybody else. Do you read anything? Who are your companions in jail?

All three of us are quite well. We often think about you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2898

440. LETTER TO RAMIBEHN PAREKH

April 24, 1932

CHI. RAMI,

A letter from you would always be a surprise for me. You said that your birthday was approaching, but forgot to mention which. As you know, I never remember. Many happy returns of the day to you. But you should also take up some work of service. Come and see me when you feel inclined.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9717. Also C.W. 698. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

441. LETTER TO TARAMATI M. TRIKUMJI

April 24, 1932

. . .[1] How is your own health? Do you meet anybody? You should take up some work of public service which is within your capacity. Occupying oneself with such work helps very much in keeping the mind calm. Serving one's neighbours also does that. There is none in this world who would never need the help of another.

[PS.]

If you wish to come and see me, you may.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 109

[1] Omission as in the source

442. A LETTER

April 24, 1932

BHAI,

If you have fully understood the value of *brahmacharya*, I think your father's pain or anger need not be taken into account. If you put his anger in one scale and dharma in the other scale, the former would weigh as light as air. But you should first decide whether you regard *brahmacharya* as dharma. If you are firm, your father will soon calm down.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9057. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

443. LETTER TO ASHRAM GIRLS

April 24, 1932

CHI.,

If you get your hair cropped, you would save the time you have to give in taking proper care of it, save expense over oil, comb, etc., and get rid of the false notion that there is beauty in hair. Without hair, the head remains clean. For a woman, absence of hair is a sign that she is observing *brahmacharya*. If girls and grown-up women get their hair cropped, the practice would cease to be regarded as sign of widowhood. If we think about the matter we may discover some other benefits also. But are not those I have mentioned enough just now?

From Gujarati: C.W. 9058. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 120

444. LETTER TO VATSALA V. DASTANE

April 24, 1932

CHI.,

I do not think that you should cut off your hair in the face of your parents' opposition. You must convince them before you take this step. I see no point in the argument put forth by your mother. If short hair is useful, the other girls may well take up

the matter. But your mother will come round if you have patience. I shall write to Anna.[1]

From Hindi: C.W. 9059. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

445. *NECESSITY OF DRAWING UP A BALANCE-SHEET*[2]

April 25, 1932

Many thoughts occur to me as I write the history of the Ashram. I become aware of our many short-comings. These reflections have led me to the conclusion that from time to time we should draw up a balance-sheet of our progress. A business man draws up a daily, a monthly and a half-yearly balance-sheet of his business, and a comprehensive balance-sheet at the end of every year. We are engaged in the business of spiritual seeking and, therefore, we should draw up a balance-sheet of our spiritual progress. Everybody should draw up such a balance-sheet for himself or herself and all of us together for the Ashram as a whole. If we do not follow this practice, we would become spiritually bankrupt, as a business man who is negligent in drawing up the balance-sheet of his business would find himself financially bankrupt. If we do not know whether we are progressing or going backwards in keeping our vows and in our other activities, we would become mechanical in all our work and, in the end, become less efficient even than machines. In other words, we would incur loss in our business.

How is such a balance-sheet to be drawn up? I will answer this question by writing down a few questions.

1. Are we untruthful in our thoughts, speech or actions? 'We' means every one of us.

2. If that is the case, who are the guilty persons and on what occasions were they guilty of untruth? What did they do when their guilt was discovered and also what action did the Ashram take?

3. During all these years of the existence of the Ashram, have we made any progress in this matter or have we become worse?

4. We should ask these questions in regard to all the vows and whenever we discover short-comings, we should try to think out suitable remedies and employ them.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to V. V. Dastane", 26-4-1932.

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 25-4-1932; *vide* the following item.

We can do the same with regard to the various activities in which we are engaged. We have to think about them from two different points of view. From the economic point of view, the question we should ask is this: 'Is the activity self-supporting?' It is our faith that if an activity is found economically self-supporting, from the moral point of view also it is likely to have been carried on along proper lines. If there is either loss or profit, we may be sure that there has been a violation of moral principles somewhere. The second point of view is this: 'Is the activity carried on primarily with a religious motive?' It is essential that all our activities in the Ashram should be carried on with a religious motive, for everything we do ought to be subordinate to dharma, that is, to truth.

Concerning both these—our vows and the other activities—I cannot help asking the following questions:

1. How is it that in the Ashram itself people deceive one another in small matters?

2. When shall we cease to distrust one another? What can we do to bring this about?

3. How is it that burglars from outside still continue to raid the Ashram?

4. Why is it that the inmates have too many personal possessions?

5. Why have we not cultivated contacts with the neighbouring villages? What is the best way of doing that?

6. Why do people continually fall ill in the Ashram?

7. What have we done for the labourers who work in the Ashram? Why is it that they have not been attracted to come and live in the Ashram? Or, rather, why should there be any labourers at all in the Ashram? In the Ashram there should be no masters and labourers.

I can write down many more such questions. But these are enough to show what I have in mind. I should like all people, young and grown-up, to start thinking. This was certainly one of my aims in insisting that all inmates should maintain a diary.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

446. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 25, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Change the name of "Ashram Samachar". The name has given rise to a needless argument whether it is not a newspaper. Since it is not a newspaper in any sense of that word, a name which suggests that it is, should also be dropped.

The title should be "Ashramvasi ane Anya Mitro Pratye"[1], and at the end Shankarbhai should sign: 'Your servant, Shankar'. There should be no subscription. No copy is sent to anybody who was not in the Ashram. The [present or former] inmates of the Ashram who receive copies must be contributing towards its expenses. If these changes are made, I would be able to send to Chhaganlal and Gangabehn the very copy you send without being obliged to make fresh copies. I think this is quite clear.

If you have not sent the cotton, don't send it now. I got a parcel from Lady Vithaldas. The quantity will last me a long time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Think over what I have said concerning the need for drawing up a balance-sheet.[2] I think something like that should be adopted as a regular practice among us.

Tell Durga that Mahadev got her letter. His leg is completely all right now. Treatment is going on for the teeth. Tell Jivanji that he should not forget to send with some intending visitor Mahadev's notes concerning the Round Table Conference and his diary of our stay in London and the other things which I have asked him to send. Ask Manibehn to see me without fail when she goes to see Narahari. She should fix with some inmate of the Ashram who may be coming to this side and travel with him.

[1] 'To Inmates of the Ashram and Other Friends'

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[Enclosed is a list of the names of 44 persons for whom I had sent signed letters to Narandas. Along with that][1] this letter to Narandasbhai and the article on "The Necessity of a Balance-sheet".[2]

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8222. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

447. LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN[3]

April 25, 1932

I wish you will not take to heart what the Bishop has been saying. Your church is in your heart. Your pulpit is the whole earth. The blue sky is the roof of your church. And what is this Catholicism? It is surely of the heart. The formula has its use. But it is made by man. If I have any right to interpret the message of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels, I have no manner of doubt in my mind that it is in the main denied in the churches, whether Roman or English, High or Low. Lazarus has no room in those places. This does not mean that the custodians know that the Man of Sorrows has been banished from the buildings called Houses of God. In my opinion, this excommunication is the surest sign that the truth is in you and with you. But my testimony is worth nothing, if when you are alone with your Maker, you do not hear His voice saying, 'Thou art on the right path.' That is the unfailing test and no other.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 87

448. LETTER TO A BENGALI ASPIRANT FOR BRAHMACHARYA

April 25, 1932

I have your letter. *Brahmacharya* is a mental state. It is undoubtedly helped by abstentiousness in all respects. But diet plays the least part in giving one the necessary mental state. Not that wrong diet will not hinder progress. What I want to say is that

[1] From *Bapuna Patro–9: Shri Narandas Gandhine,* Pt. I, p. 354

[2] This paragraph appears to have been added by Mahadev Desai.

[3] The letter was in reply to the addressee's letter in which he had said that a Bishop had called him a traitor to Christ and had prohibited him from preaching in churches.

right diet, taken in moderation, is not the only thing in the observance of *brahmacharya* though it is undoubtedly one of the necessary things. Indulgence of the palate will be the surest sign of weak mental state which is repugnant to *brahmacharya*. The sovereign remedy for the observance of *brahmacharya* is realization that the soul is a part of the Divine and that the Divine resides within us. A heart grasp of the fact induces mental purity and strength. You should therefore read such books as would enable you to grasp the central fact, cultivate such companionship as would constantly make you think of the Divine presence and follow all the directions given about fresh air, hip baths, etc., in my book called *Self-restraint* v. *Self-indulgence*. And when you are doing all these things regularly and industriously, do not brood over all that happens, but have confidence that success is bound to attend[1] your effort.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 117

449. A LETTER[2]

April 25, 1932

I have your pathetic letter. Seeing that God is to be found within, no research in physical sciences can give one a living faith in the Divine. Some have undoubtedly been helped even by physical sciences, but these are to be counted on one's finger-tips. My suggestion therefore to you is not to argue about the existence of Divinity, just as you do not argue about your existence, but simply assume like Euclid's axiom, that God is, if only because innumerable teachers have left their evidence and what is more their lives are an unimpeachable evidence. And then, as evidence of your own faith repeat Ramanama[3] every morning and every evening at least for a quarter of an hour each time and saturate yourself with the *Ramayana* reading.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 118

[1] The source has "attain".

[2] The addressee, an M.A., B.Sc., had written: "Having studied science extensively, I cannot have faith in God, but I do feel that I should have it. How can I cultivate it?"

[3] The source has this in Devanagari.

450. LETTER TO A WOMAN

April 25, 1932

Laziness is not the only reason for your not writing the diary. It is difficult to write the truth in it. Try to do it and see.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 120

451. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

April 26, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

I thank you for your two letters and am expecting early information about my four friends in the Belgaum prison. Since writing to you last, I have received two letters, one from Manibehn Patel and one from Kakasaheb Kalelkar. From both the letters I could see that the very information that I wanted was scratched out by the Jail authorities at Belgaum. The letters therefore proved practically valueless for the purpose for which they were intended. And reading between the lines I could also see that Kakasaheb was not at all well.

However as you have kindly promised prompt attention, I am not disturbing the peace of my mind.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] For Doyle's reply, *vide* Appendix VII.

452. *LETTER TO K. NATARAJAN*[1]

April 26, 19

DEAR MR. NATARAJAN,

I am sure you must have read the reports of an exhibiti given by an Indian yogi of his powers before an audien specially assembled at the Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital. The yo is reported to have eaten a live viper's head, nails, nitric ac and the like, and that the Chief Justice and his wife were amo the distinguished audience. The report states that one lady was disgusted at the eating of the viper's head that she abruptly l the hall before the exhibition was finished. I do not know h you look at such exhibitions. In my opinion they are degradi both for the demonstrator, as also for the public. And if t demonstrator died, as he most likely would, if these demonstratio were continued, those who encouraged him by attending the I should hold guilty of manslaughter. I do not think that eith science or humanity is served by such revolting exhibitions. T text-books on Hatha yoga clearly lay down that the Hathayo are expected not to exhibit their yogic powers or make use them for purposes of gain. If you agree with me, will you n initiate an agitation in the daily Press for preventing such cru exhibitions? One man, I suppose you know, recently died Rangoon precisely giving demonstrations such as the one report in Bombay.[2]

Yours sincerely
M. K. GAND

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 123. Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Ho Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. I, p. 169

[1] Editor, *Indian Social Reformer*

[2] In his reply Natarajan wrote: "I agree with you that exhibitions of kind you refer to are repulsive, and as they serve no useful purpose, th should be discouraged by publ. opinion. They recall a saying of Ramakrish Paramahamsa's, which I read s mewhere. Someone asked him if it was p sible to walk on water. "Yes", was his reply, "but sensible people pay a p to the ferryman" (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 107). *Vide* also "Let to K. Natarajan", 25-5-1932.

453. LETTER TO MAUDE ROYDEN

April 26, 1932

I thank you for your letter[1] enclosing the correspondence between yourself and Sir Erric Drummond[2] and Sir John Simon. When I read about your movement[3], I did not think that you were in any way showing preference to China over India. I then felt that you were quite right in concentrating your energy over a situation that threatened to involve bloodshed on a vast scale and that too by the adoption of the method of satyagraha.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 90

454. LETTER TO V. V. DASTANE

April 26, 1932

BHAI DASTANE,

Shanta sent me your letter written in pencil. Vatsala seems to be impatient to get her hair cropped. I have written[4] to her saying that though I support her idea,[5] this was not a matter in which she could disregard the wishes of her parents. Vatsala desires me to write to you. I do feel that we should encourage our children to take a step like this or that, if we cannot go so far as to encourage them, we ought to give them complete freedom to act as they wish. Even if she changes her mind later, it is not as if hair will not grow again. However, do not attach any weight to my opinion in this matter. You may do as you think fit, as you may have a number of reasons for not giving your per-

[1] Which read: "I hesitated to send you the correspondence because I fear you must think that our first concern should have been India, but I believe you will understand and sympathize with our sense of the extreme urgency of the hostilities between China and Japan in the Far East. I, therefore, send these letters for your information." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 89)

[2] Secretary-General of the League of Nations

[3] For organizing a Peace Army

[4] *Vide* "Letter to Vatsala V. Dastane", pp. 363-4.

[5] *Vide* also "Letter to Ashram Girls", p. 363.

mission to Vatsala to do as she wishes. I hope you are in good health. I envy the company you have got.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3086

455. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI M. PATEL

April 26, 1932

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I got all your letters, and I have also replied to them. I am very glad that you go and see Abbas Saheb. I would be happy if you come and see me here. But it would be more honourable for us if you do not come. When we are trusted, we should interpret the conditions on our side to our disadvantage. This is why I do not ask you to come.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8997

456. LETTER TO MAITHILISHARAN GUPTA

April 26, 1932

BHAI MAITHILISHARANJI,

I have your letter[1]. It is hardly a letter, it is sheer poetry. You have won over me. I follow your point and from that viewpoint Urmila's grief is pertinent. As a matter of fact, I had no right to say a word. My study of the scriptures is insignificant and of literature even less. My knowledge of the vernacular too is of the same order. Being well aware of my own short-comings, I gave you my impressions[2] just as they occurred to me. My friends, knowing my deficiencies but also my devotion to Truth, ask for my opinion whatever its worth. Prompted by love I sent you my comments, but I could never have expected such a beautiful, poetic letter in reply. I shall preserve it and read it again; which means that I must re-read *Saket* from the viewpoint expounded by you. Although your language is pretty easy, I occasionally

[1] Dated April 15, 1932 (S.N. 19312)
[2] *Vide* pp. 273-4.

find it difficult to understand it fully, owing to my scanty knowledge of Hindi. Yet another reason of my difficulty is my limited Hindi vocabulary. Is there any dictionary of Hindi wherein I may find the meanings of all the difficult words used in *Saket* and such other books? I know that a determined effort will by itself make many things clear.

My *vandemataram* to Ajmeriji[1]. I remember his *bhajans* very well. God willing, I shall listen to them again some time.

Yes, I have written[2] to Parasram to include *Saket* and *Anagh* in the Ashram curriculum. Possibly a start has already been made.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From Hindi: C.W. 9456. Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi

457. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

April 27, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I do think it would be harmful if boys and girls play *hututu* together.[3] In this game, the players catch and throw down one another. Boys and girls cannot play such a game together. We should not knowingly do something which may rouse impure feelings in us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 9063. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] A Muslim poet who had presented a few of his works in Hindi to Gandhiji in 1929 during the latter's visit to Jhansi

[2] *Vide*, also pp. 321-2.

[3] *Vide* also "A Letter", p. 352.

458. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

April 27, 1932

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

After all if a letter had to be written about getting the specialists here, Sardar Vallabhbhai thought that he should write the letter himself. Hence the enclosed from him. You will see in that letter absence of any mention of 12 lb. loss of weight. Of course I wholly disagree with you and the other doctors that these local troubles have nothing to do with the digestive apparatus. As a layman I strongly hold the conviction that the nose trouble has much to do with the loss of weight. In Sardar Vallabhbhai's case in spite of his strong will, I know that the constant and irritating attention that the trouble invites disturbs him as it would anybody. If nothing else, the disturbance itself would be a sufficient cause to put a person off his food. I know that in my case I should simply stop taking food if I had such trouble. I would impute it to something wrong in the stomach in spite of medical opinion to the contrary. All this however is merely by the way.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

459. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO HARILAL GANDHI[1]

April 27, 1932

I will still not give up hope of your reformation, for I have not given up hope about myself. I have always believed that I was a bad man when Ba carried you in her body, but after your birth I have been doing greater and greater penance for my former life. How can I, therefore, give up all hope? I will con-

[1] The addressee had written a letter to Gandhiji demanding that his daughter, Manu, should be taken away from the custody of his wife's sister, Balibehn Vohra, and be restored to him. He had also complained about Bali's assault on him and held Gandhiji responsible for it. *Vide* also "Letter to Manu Gandhi", pp. 269-70 and pp. 292-3.

tinue to hope as long as you and I are alive. And hence, contrary to my usual practice, I am preserving your letter so that, when you have awakened, you may see the insolence of your letter and weep over it and laugh at your folly. I am not preserving this letter to throw it in your face then, but only that I may laugh at it, if God wills that I should see that day. All of us are full of short-comings. But it is our dharma to overcome them. I pray that you do so.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 125-6

460. LETTER TO A SIKH

April 28, 1932

With reference to the growing of hair and beard I hold a totally different view from yours.[1] Whatever value outward symbols had before, they do not and ought not to possess the superlative value that you seem to attach to the growing of hair and beard. For me, I can see no reason whatever for departing from a long established practice which I have accepted for myself. I would far rather that people judged me by my deeds than by my outward appearance.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 129

461. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI

April 28, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMI,

I got your letter. You find it difficult to write in ink because you are not accustomed to doing so. But once you get accustomed to it you will discover that it is easier to write in ink than with pencil. Moreover, there is greater pressure on the fingers when we write with a pencil, and hence the hand gets tired sooner.

I myself had written the letter. If the handwriting resembles this, then the letter was written with the left hand. My

[1] The addressee had written: "I see not much difference between a true saint like Guru Nanak Dev and your noble self. It will be in the fitness of things if the greatest living Indian and the greatest man of the present world keep *keshas* like all the great men of all times." (*Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 128)

handwriting is certainly bad. No one should copy me in that respect. My right thumb is paining.

Blessings from Sardar, Mahadevbhai and me.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2810. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

462. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 28, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

We have two iron machines for crushing nuts, like almonds, etc. One was sent by Gregg and is brand new, and the other has been used for some time. Keshu or Premabehn is likely to know about them. They were used only by Pyarelal. Perhaps Kusum will know where they are. If you can find them, send one of them to me immediately. By 'immediately' I only mean that it may be sent with somebody who is coming here to see me, or by railway parcel if it does not cost more than eight annas. Let Keshu examine the machine before it is sent. He, too, has had some experience of using them. My experiment with almonds is going on. One person requires about five hours to crush them, and the quantity lasts me barely nine days. If I eat more every day, it would probably last only six days. Why should anybody, I thought, have to labour so much when we have a machine for the purpose? Hence this request. Some almonds were crushed today and they will last me till Friday week. If the machine arrives before then, the problem will be solved. By the time you get this letter, you will have received the letter which I wrote[1] to you today about Harilal. I expect this letter to be posted tomorrow, that is, on Friday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8223. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] This is not available. *Vide*, however, "Fragment of Letter to Harilal Gandhi", pp. 374-5.

463. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

April 28, 1932

The question you have put me about the meaning of *pinda* and *brahmanda* is a big one. But I will explain the idea in brief. For our purpose, we may understand the word *pinda* to mean our body, and the word *brahmanda* to mean the earth. Now, the statement [as in the *pinda*, so in the *brahmanda*] means that everything that is in the body is there in the earth, too, and likewise there is nothing in the earth which is not in our body. The latter is composed of the same substance as the earth. There are five elements of the earth, and the body is made of the same five elements. Innumerable creatures exist on the earth and also in the body. As one body perishes and another is born, so the substance of the earth also is continually undergoing transformations. We can amplify this analogy still further. But we can deduce from what I have said, that if we know the real nature of our body, we shall know the real nature of the earth as well and shall not have to go far afield in search of knowledge. Our body is the nearest thing to us, and if we understand it we shall have attained our object. If we try to know about the earth, our knowledge will always be incomplete. That is why wise men have told us that there is nothing in the *brahmanda* which is not to be found in the *pinda*. Therefore, if we know the self, that knowledge will include all other knowledge. But we may also enjoy the knowledge of other things which we gain while we strive for knowledge of the self, since we shall be enjoying it as incidental to our pursuit of knowledge of the self . . .[1]. I think that Narasinhbhai has not thought deeply enough in interpreting the *Gita*. We should not confuse the Krishna of the *Gita* with the Krishna of history. The problem before Krishna was not that of violence or non-violence. Arjuna shrank not from violence but from having to kill his relations. Krishna, therefore, explained to him that in doing one's duty one ought not to treat one's relations differently from others. In the age when the *Gita* was composed, the men who influenced its thought did not raise the question whether the violence committed in war was right or not. That question seems to have

[1] Omission as in the source

been raised only in modern times. The principle of non-violence was accepted even then by all Hindus; but opinions differed then, as they do now, as regards what involved violence and what did not. Our descendants may see violence in many things in which we do not see it today. For instance, we do destroy life when we consume milk or cook cereals. It is conceivable that future generations may wish to refrain from such violence and stop drinking milk and cooking cereals. Today we commit this violence and still claim without any hesitation that we observe non-violence. In exactly the same manner, war was regarded such a normal thing in the age of the *Gita* that people did not feel that they violated the principle of non-violence by engaging in it. The illustration of the war in the *Gita*, therefore, seems to me perfectly innocent. If, however, we reflect over the teaching of the *Gita* as a whole and examine the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna*, of the man who has merged in the Brahman, of the *bhakta* or of the yogi, we can come to only one conclusion, namely, that the Shri Krishna who taught the path of the *Gita* was literally an avatar of ahimsa and his exhortation to Arjuna to fight does not in the least detract from the purity of his ahimsa. On the contrary, if he had advised Arjuna to follow any other course, I am sure that the perfection of his knowledge would have been called in question and he would never have come to be worshipped as the most perfect avatar of God. You should read what I have written in this connection in *Anasaktiyoga*[1].

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 127-8

464. *LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA*

April 29, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

1. It does not befit us to ask the questions you have asked about Maulana Shaukat Ali. We should not pay attention to the short-comings of other people or sit in judgment over anybody. We should exhaust all our energies in examining ourselves. As long as we can detect even a single weakness in ourselves and, despite it, inwardly wish that our relatives, acquaintances and friends should not cut off relations with us, we are not entitled to see short-comings in others or criticize them. If we unin-

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLI, pp. 90-101.

tentionally see such short-comings in anybody, we may, if it lies in our power and if it is proper for us to do so, ask the person concerned about them, but nobody else. There is no gain in asking other people. However, since you wished to ask me, you did quite well in doing so. For otherwise I would not have had an opportunity to lecture to you in this way.

And now I reply to your question. From a distance and on the basis of the known facts only, we should not approve of the Maulana's activities. However, I cannot arrive at any definite opinion without hearing in detail about his activities from his own mouth. According to me, it is not correct to say that the followers of the Prophet ought to, or may, do all things done by him. All people are not entitled to do everything that the great men may have done. We have seen that such imitation leads to undesirable results. However, we find that Hindus, Muslims and followers of other faiths do not only not follow this golden rule always, but even act as if they were entitled to do certain things because the Prophets or avatars had done them. Seeing that this is the general attitude, I am not surprised that the Maulana has cited the Prophet's example.

2. What we do about Bhishma and others we may also apply to social workers of the present day. I feel that the present practice of (offering) *jalanjali* needs reform.

Everyone who has written to me on the subject had nothing but praise about the *Ramayana* class which you have been conducting. Go on in the same interesting way. It would be in my view a great achievement if all at the Ashram come to love speaking in Hindi and become interested in the *Ramayana*. I am, therefore, very much pleased that you have thrown yourself heart and soul into this work.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7495. Also C.W. 4972. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

465. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

April 30, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

I got your letter. I think that if you definitely feel better in Bombay than at any other place, you should go there. You should observe the rules, that is, the vows of the Ashram. You should

behave courteously with everyone and make yourself useful wherever you live.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 852. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

466. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

April 30, 1932

CHI. MANGALA (DARLING),

To follow one's *atman* does not mean acting as one pleases. It means obeying the voice of God who dwells in our heart. We pray daily, keep vows and practise self-control in order that we may hear Him. When we are convinced that we have heard the voice of the Lord, we should not worry no matter who is displeased with us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4084. Also C.W. 48. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

467. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

April 30, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

This time your handwriting was better. You should write like this every time and keep on trying to improve it still further.

God is self-created. He is not born. If He were born, what would be the meaning of saying that He was God?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 265. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

468. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

April 30, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

It is not at all necessary to wear a pin in your hair. Dreams come to everybody. Nobody knows why they come. You will be able to improve your handwriting if you try hard enough. Do not get disheartened.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9426. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

469. FRAGMENT OF A DRAFT LETTER TO LORD SANKEY

May 1, 1932

You have given judgment against me on evidence of which I have been kept in ignorance and your judgment has been given at a time when I have been rendered incapable of defending myself.[1]

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 97

[1] Mahadev Desai explains: "Bapu was deeply pained to read Sankey's article in *Newsletter*. He said it was a vicious piece of writing and he felt he should write to its author. . . .

The Sardar who was listening to the dictation remarked: 'Instead of writing such a longish letter, why don't you simply tell him that he is a liar?'

Bapu laughed and replied, 'In fact I have said something stronger still. I say his conduct is ungentlemanly. I go further and say that he has betrayed a friend or colleague. This is something that would cut an Englishman to the quick, but I have written what I felt. People like Shafi and the Aga Khan who met him every now and then must have told him all these lies. And he not only believed them to be true, but never asked me about them and throws the blame on me now when I am in prison. . . .'

The keenness of Bapu's feeling is evident from this sentence in the first draft of the letter. . . .

Part of the sentence was later replaced with the following: 'You have given it after rendering me incapable of defending myself.' . . .

It is not true again that my claim is exaggerated. Why should our claim to independence be considered exaggerated? It may be so considered if I propose to reduce England to slavery. I set forth the Congress demand in my speeches but during the discussions I dealt with any number of formulas." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 96-7)

470. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

May 1, 1932

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

It is good that you wrote to me. I am going to write about the subject[1]; so I do not expatiate on it here. You drew the attention of a responsible person to what you felt was a slip. Now you have only to watch what he would do. As for you, you have done your duty.

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 346. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

471. LETTER TO MOHAN N. PARIKH

May 1, 1932

CHI. MOHAN,

A boy of your age should study, play and do some work. He should also pray. I hope that if you go to Belgaum you will certainly come here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9179

472. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

May 1, 1932

CHI. MANI (PARIKH),

I was expecting that you would come this week. When you come, most probably you will be able to see Mahadev too. I now get news from Belgaum.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5972. Also C.W. 3289. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

[1] The reference is to "Lesson of the National Week", pp. 386-8.

473. *LETTER TO NARAYAN DESAI*

May 1, 1932

CHI. NARAYANRAO ALIAS NARAYAN DESAI ALIAS BABLO,

If we read the *Gita* and understand it, we shall know how to do our duty. By spinning during the National Week or at other times, we increase the wealth of the country and serve the poor.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9479

474. *LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL*

May 1, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

Gandhiraj means that a person, that is Gandhi, will rule the country. What is the good of that? In swaraj, everybody will rule, and everybody will include you, me and all others. If you do not understand how that can be, ask Premabehn to explain it to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3987. Also C.W. 33. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

475. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*[1]

May 1, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

If the burden of work is excessive on you, I cannot accept your view that it cannot be reduced. That view betrays ignorant attachment and weakness. I can believe that the cause of your irritability lies in yourself and not in the weight of work on you.

[1] This was in reply to her letter complaining of mental exhaustion. She had also stated that she was unhappy and felt dissatisfied, and that separation from Gandhiji pained her.

If that is so, you will gradually learn to keep your balance, for you will not deceive yourself for a long time. I do not, however, wish to pester you about this. Try to harden your sensitive nature.

Among our books there are some Urdu ones. A few of them are likely to be with Imam Saheb. Inquire in the Ashram too. If you cannot identify them, Parasram will certainly be able to do so. If you find *Sirat-Un-Nabi* among these books, send it to me. It is written by Maulana Shibli. There is another biography of Nabi written by Dr. Mahomed Ali. Send that too. The *Sirat* is in two parts.

You are surrounded on all sides by labourers, and the life which they lead is the only true life. That has been the idea behind the Ashram. True, the labourers should be seekers after truth. Are you not one? Are not the other women and the men also such seekers? I believe that everyone is so to the best of his or her capacity.

You ask me when you will be able to visit me. If you use your eyes, you cannot but see me. My spirit dwells there, though the body may be here, and it will continue to dwell there even if the latter is reduced to ashes. It is quite possible that when I am there in body, my soul may not be there. Understand this truth and give up your ignorant idea.

One must feel discontent, but it should be regarding oneself. The day one believes that one has become perfect, one's fall has begun. Hence one ought to be discontented about oneself. But such discontent does not mean that one should wish all the time to take up new duties.

I cannot, however, explain all this by argument. Time will do its work. Where you see pitch darkness today, you will see light tomorrow. "*Premal Jyoti*"[1] seems to me to be the only *bhajan* which truthfully describes this condition of mind. The meaning is very well brought out in Gujarati. The original English is a marvellous creation, though.

I have been told that Dhurandhar keeps fairly good health. What is your present weight? How much milk and curds do you take?

How many volumes do you think there are in the library?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10283. Also C.W. 6731. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] A Gujarati rendering, by Narasinhrao B. Divetia, of Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light".

476. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

May 1, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

Just as from one grain of wheat grow millions of grains, so from two human beings millions of human beings may be born. You can know this even by doing a multiplication sum on your slate. Try to do it.

I did not say that we should merely learn to turn the charkha with the left hand. What is necessary is that we should learn to do with the left hand everything which we can do with the right hand. To start with, try to write and eat with your left hand and clean your teeth with it, and after that you may try to do other things.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5772. Also C.W. 2995. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

477. *LETTER TO VIMAL KISHORE MEHROTRA*

May 1, 1932

CHI. VIMAL,

Write in ink. Anyway, you did well in writing to me.

Learn about the *yajna* from Parasram and, if it needs further explanation, do write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 4973. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra. Also G.N. 7496

478. LETTER TO SANTU

May 1, 1932

CHI. SANTU,

We must make the least use of weapons which can hurt as we want to observe non-violence. I have not opposed the practice of lathi and *lezim*. I have found no fault with wax candles.

BAPU

[From Hindi]

From a photostat: G.N. 7712

479. LESSON OF THE NATIONAL WEEK[1]

May 2, 1932

I received a letter from Shri Bhagwanji regarding the self-purification week celebrated in April last. In that letter he draws my attention to the waste of cotton which occurs and he also suspects that some persons knowingly gave a higher figure for the yarn spun by them. He states that the waste was of two kinds: one, the quantity of broken threads was more than permissible, and, two, since the spinning was done with excessive speed the count of the yarn spun was very low.[2]

If anybody knowingly gave a wrong figure for the yarn spun by him or her, I would regard it as a serious matter. Such conduct would be a blot on the good name of the Ashram. The spinning done by a person who gives a wrong figure will not be accepted by God as *yajna*. The figure entered in our records has no value. The real value of the spinning done remains what it is. It cannot be increased or diminished by entering a higher or lower figure in our record. Besides, the cash value of the yarn is no more than a few annas; its real value lies in the sincerity of the motive with which the spinning is done. That value can never be estimated by us. It is recorded only in the divine book, for who but God can understand man's motives. However, we have

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 28-4/2-5-1932; *vide* the following item.

[2] For Gandhiji's reply to Bhagwanji P. Pandya, *vide* p. 382.

one test. If such *yajna* does not yield the expected result in time, we may conclude that there is some impurity in us. Let everybody examine his work from this point of view and, if anybody has been guilty of untruth, let him or her humbly confess it and so purify himself or herself. We cannot, in the Ashram, keep a secret watch over anybody; most of the work is carried on on the basis of trust in one another. The Ashram cannot be run on any other basis. Everybody, therefore, should know his duty and do it. Let the inmates also think if they have been guilty of anything else besides giving wrong figures for yarn. Were they slack in doing the spinning? Did they do it as a task forced on them? Did they give to it less than the appointed time? Did they throw away the broken threads? This is the condition for a true *yajna*: the person doing it should give his whole-hearted attention to the work, and do it with all his skill and intelligence.

Let nobody believe that he or she may behave anyhow throughout the year and still be able to observe the rules explained above during the National Week. It should be remembered that one's whole life in the Ashram has to be a continuous *yajna*. Among all its activities, spinning is the supreme *yajna*. The only difference between the National Week and the rest of the year is that we give more time to spinning during that Week.

I suggest that the following rules should be observed in future:

1. If the yarn is of less than 20 counts, the spinning should not be regarded as *yajna*.

2. If the waste exceeds a fixed limit, the spinning should not be regarded as *yajna*.

3. If the strength of the yarn comes to less than a fixed limit, then also the spinning should not be regarded as *yajna*.

In *yajna* or any other work, the neatness of the product and the sincerity with which the work is done are more important than the number or quantity of what is produced. Fifty bullocks who are physically unfit will prove a burden on the owner, whereas one strong bullock will do his work well. Fifty knives with blunt edges will not be useful in mincing vegetables, but one knife with a sharp edge will do the work perfectly. We should, therefore, learn to give our full attention to every work which we do. We should devote the next [National] Week exclusively to this subject.

I observe that some inmates find spinning a boring work and prefer something else. There is one natural weakness in this attitude. A person is bored by the work which he has to do every day and persuades himself that, if he had been doing some other work instead, he would not get bored in that manner. However, if that

other work becomes his daily work, he would ask for something else still. Besides, consciously or unconsciously persons who do spinning think of the low earnings from that work. According to the standpoint of Ashram this is a wrong attitude. The wage for spinning is the lowest because it is the only work at present which millions can do and which can help them to earn a little money. All of us, therefore, do voluntary spinning as *yajna* in order to popularize the work. The idea behind *yajna* is that we dedicate the work to God and have faith that He will provide us the wherewithal for our maintenance. Let everyone understand this significance of *yajna* and daily do the *yajna* of spinning with whole-hearted devotion and with zest.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

480. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 28/[May 2, 1932][1]

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have already written to you today a letter[2] about the problem of Harilal. I hope you will receive it without delay. I need not, therefore, write anything more about the matter.

Send more pills for Gangabehn made from ten *tolas* of *chaiarj* and ten *tolas* of asafoetida. I had received the quantity which I had asked you earlier to send. If you send the pills with somebody who is coming here to see me, I will arrange for their being delivered to her.

Personally, I liked Tilakam's going to Thana. Others also may go, if they are not likely to be a burden on Pyare Ali. That would look nice too, for we should be as happy to be a Muslim's guest as a Hindu's. Besides, it would be a painful thing if anybody felt that, since Tilakam was not one of us and since he came from an *Antyaja* family, the present arrangement was good enough for him. If Jamna willingly goes there, Noorbanu will shower love on her. Since the first day that we met I have always felt a beautiful light of purity shining in her eyes.

I hope Gangadevi is all right now. I had a letter from Santok. She says that she would like Radha to stay on in Deolali for four months more. If that is likely to restore her health completely, it would be all right. I have had no letter at all from Ba.

[1] Inferred from the contents

[2] *Vide* footnote on p. 376.

I cannot say that the change of hands in spinning has reduced the pain. But I see that, had I not made this change, I would have been unable to continue working. I can see from my experience of drawing the rounds with the right hand that slowly rotating the wheel causes much less strain in the elbow than drawing the rounds hour after hour. I now draw about 200 rounds daily with the right hand. That is five or ten more than the number I used to draw with the left hand a week ago. The average then was 187½ [rounds] a day, or say rather that I kept up that average with an effort. Of course, more time is spent now in spinning. But in any case I had been giving more time in a week previously. From every point of view, therefore, the present practice seems all right. There is no cause at all for worrying about the condition of my hand.

There is, of course, no ban on printing copies of "Watching the Heavens" and the other articles I send, but I think it would be wiser not to print any. Rather than print copies, the better course would be for somebody to dictate to a group of five to ten persons. This would be more in keeping with our principles. By following this practice, we would learn again the art of writing a neat hand. The copies made in this manner could then be circulated among those who might wish to read the articles. Those persons may make more copies if they wish to. Or everybody should pass on the copy supplied to him, on the same day on which he receives it, to another person whose name is given to him. In this way it will be possible to circulate a few copies among a large number of persons and all those who get them will read the article with special interest and derive greater benefit from it. Think over this.

[*May 2, 1932*]

Read carefully what I have written about the work done during the National Week this time. If you agree with me, show it to all others, and also try to follow in practice as much of it as can be done. If you wish to make any changes in my suggestions, you may certainly do so. I have, generally speaking, only my experience to go by. In the Ashram you have a veritable mine of experience. It is possible, therefore, that you will find some of my suggestions impracticable, but there is no doubt that we ought to pay attention to the fineness of the count and strength of yarn and to reducing waste. At the examination, this was the method of evaluation formerly adopted. The candidate was awarded marks equal to the figure of the count multiplied by that of the strength. I do not know what

method is followed now. I would introduce the factor of waste i calculating the marks—reduce the marks in proportion to th quantity of waste. Mahadev and I have thought out this metho Waste up to one *tola* for every pound [of yarn] may be condone If the waste exceeds one *tola*, for every additional *tola* the marl arrived at by multiplying the figure of the count by that of th strength should be reduced by sixteen. That is, the marks shoul be reduced by one for every 1/16 *tola* of waste. If the waste is a much as ten *tolas*, the candidate should fail. However, you you self may decide whether waste of one *tola* or of more than on *tola* per pound should be condoned. I have given the figur merely as illustrations to explain my idea. If I were an exa miner, I would even take into account how the candidate sa when spinning, in what condition he maintained his spinning wheel, whether he kept the place where he sat for spinnin quite clean and whether he could repair a spinning-wheel whe it went out of order, and calculate marks for all these. Th means that the work of the candidates would be constantly ob served by somebody. This observer would be one of the exa miners at the test. I would not mind if such a practice had th effect of reducing our output. What is essential is that we shoul be sure in our minds that we were vigilant and were progre sing from day to day. I have stated in the accompanying not that when the yarn spun is of less than 20 counts, the spinnin should not be counted as *yajna*. This does not mean that no credi should be given for the spinning done. The candidate would g on spinning every day and be awarded marks for his work, th yarn could be made use of, but such a spinner should not b considered to be performing *yajna*. He would be only a can didate.

Read the letter which I have written to Dr. Mehta. Forwar to Jetpur the letter which I have written to Manjula, Maganlal's wife. I have forgotten her father's name. If you do not remem ber it, Champa or Ratilal will probably know it. Read the lette before sealing it, and communicate the address to me also. have already written to you regarding Kusum. Nobody ha come to see me till now except Trivenibehn. About Budhabha do what you think proper.

Post the accompanying letter to Hill only if you think it i all right, for if he comes just now it is you who will have t

[1] On the National Week; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's youngest son who had gone abroad

shoulder the burden. You must have received my letter regarding Harilal. I had another letter of bitter complaint from Manu.

BAPU

[PS.]

In some of the letters this time, I have omitted "Blessings from". The words are understood. I have omitted them to save time. As I write with the left hand, I naturally like to save as many words as I can. You will observe that I pay more attention to making every letter in a word distinct. I think that, if I write still more slowly, the handwriting with the left hand may be a little better. Is there no limit to the wishes of an old man who has arrived at death's door?

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8224. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

481. TELEGRAM TO DAHYABHAI PATEL[1]

May 2, 1932

[REGARD THIS AS] RELEASE FROM LIVING DEATH.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 132

482. TELEGRAM TO MANIBEHN PATEL

May 2, 1932

YASHODA PASSED AWAY YESTERDAY. REGARD THIS AS RELEASE FROM LIVING DEATH.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 83

483. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

May 2, 1932

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

I am grateful to you for your reply[2] to my letter of the 11th March. I had hardly expected any reply to that letter. I wrote it purely as a matter of duty that I thought I owed you. How-

[1] Vallabhbhai Patel's son. According to Mahadev Desai, this was sent on receipt of the news about the death of addressee's wife, Yashoda.

[2] *Vide* Appendix III.

ever much we may differ in our views, in all I may do I want to be correct to the best of my ability and knowledge. I quite agree with you that you could not possibly have said more than you have done in your letter under reply, so far as the first part is concerned. As to the second part of your letter, it would ill become me, as a prisoner, to enter into any argument on merits. I must therefore content myself by simply declaring my conviction that even the newspapers that I am permitted to receive show how grossly misinformed you must be with reference to the state of things in this country.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9556. Courtesy: India Office Library

484. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

May 3, 1932

DEAR AGATHA,

I have your letter of the 15th ultimo. Yes, Mahadev is with us. You have in English the saying that two is company, three is none. Somehow or other we three are belying that saying and are getting on quite well. You must be feeling considerably relieved now that you have Deenabandhu with you.[1] Whether you call Mahadev's little hope—or shall we say big hope?—Master Desai or some other it is the same thing to him, because he is utterly innocent of English. But the book you have sent I have no doubt contains many pictures. These he will enjoy without stopping to inquire how you have addressed him.[2]

With love from us both.

BAPU

[PS.]

Love to Charlie.

From a photostat: G.N. 1453

[1] The addressee was helping C. F. Andrews and this was one of "the ways in which she interpreted Mr. Gandhi's request . . . to work for mutual understanding between India and Britain" (*Agatha Harrison,* p. 68).

[2] Up to this the letter is in Mahadev Desai's hand; the rest is in Gandhiji's left hand.

485. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

May 3, 1932

I got your letter. I would not worry over the loss of twelve pounds of weight, if your strength has not gone down and you suffer from no particular disease. I frequently write to Taramati, and this time she also has been writing fairly often. In the last letter Dilip[1] also wrote two lines. Of course I had to ask for that favour. By now Taramati must have visited you.

According to me, rebirth is a fact proved by scientific experiments and by people's memories of past lives. To accept such memories as proof, we have to put trust in men who have narrated their experiences. But so many persons have borne witness to their remembering their past lives that we cannot brush aside their evidence. I would not, however, spend time convincing anybody about the reality of rebirth; nor would I enter into too much argument on the subject. There are several things scientifically established, our disbelief in which is of no great consequence in our lives. It is possible that rebirth may be so defined by somebody that the usual proof offered in support of it will not satisfy him. My own definition of it is just this. The soul does not cease to exist with the end of the body, but migrates from one existence to another, and that is rebirth. That is, I would say that even Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians who believe in the Day of Judgment believe in rebirth according to my definition of it. The acquisition of another body, in my view, follows as a necessary corollary from this belief. However, I know that the traditional Christian view does not permit it, though an increasing number of Christians now believe in the possibility of the soul getting another body.

Lagnantar will not serve as a Gujarati equivalent of 'divorce'. *Lagnantar* means another marriage, which is possible even without a divorce. If no current word is available, I would coin a new word *Lagnabhanga*. On my asking Mahadev, he says that he was going to suggest this very word. So we have, as the saying goes, two prescriptions of the same cure for an illness.

[1] Addressee's son

Taramati will probably find it difficult to get the 'Yeravda chakra'—the Yeravda spinning-wheel—in Bombay. I am writing to her and advising her to write to Bardoli or the Ashram and ask them to send it directly to you. Your interpretation of *Gita*, XVIII. [66] cannot contradict mine. I do not now remember what the interpretation I offered in my letters was. But I would certainly oppose your interpretation if you tried to make out the idea of surrender to God to be a path in itself unconnected with other duties. I have often noticed that what we have said or wish to say had already been said by somebody else in different words. Instead of noting a difference or contradiction between the two explanations, I see the identity of meaning. What does it matter if the language differs? I am aware that there are certain risks in following this method, but they exist only for those persons who twist the meanings of words to see and prove the identity of the meaning of the passages in question. I don't think there is any such risk for a person who sees such identity spontaneously. Hence, the question we face is, whether the better course is to form the habit of seeing identity of meaning or to proceed on the assumption that difference in language indicates difference in meaning. In my view, it is dangerous to see difference in meaning in verbal difference. I very much like to see identity rather than difference of meaning between Ishvar and Allah.

It seems that apart from Kishorelal and Jairamdas you have no other companions. Ask them to write to me if they can without forgoing their right to write an ordinary letter, or include in such ordinary letter what they wish to write to me. I had one letter from Jairamdas, to which I replied. It is not at all necessary for you to let go writing a letter to Taramati for the sake of being able to write to me. It would be enough if you include in your letter to Taramati whatever you wish to communicate to me; or, if you write in the letter to me what you wish to tell her, to that at any rate there can be no objection.

We three are happy here. It is now three months since I gave up milk. In its place, I take almonds with bread. So far, the weight has been maintained. And there is no complaint of constipation, so that I am carrying on with this diet for the present.

Mahadev points out that in Marathi they use the word *vivahavichchheda* for *lagnabhanga*. Both the words had occurred to me but I liked *lagnabhanga* better. However, I would certainly accept the word *vivahavichchheda* and perhaps even prefer it since I

support the view that the terms newly coined in Indian languag should be uniform.

Convey our due regards to the company there.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, pp. 107-9

486. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

May 3, 193

DEAR SISTERS,

I had intended to send this letter along with the post dis patched today, but forgot to do so as I was in some hurry anc hard pressed for time. After the packet of letters was handec over for posting, I remembered, and could still have written tc you and sent the letter, but decided to put off. I hope all o you help in nursing Gangadevi. At the Ashram, it is our aim to create such an atmosphere that no one, including children and the old persons there, should feel the absence of relations. Anybody who regulates his or her life by the principles of dharma should first look after those whom he or she does not regard as relations. For, one's relations are not likely to remain uncared for, and if one makes it a point always to pay attention first to persons who are not one's relations, by and by one would learn to pay equal attention to relations and others. It is a matter of congratulation that the children of Rabaris[1] are attending Manibehn's classes. I was glad to read what you wrote about the girls. You will have taken a great step forward if you are able to act towards them exactly as you have indicated in your letter. Two girls have put me this question in their letter: 'May girls use bob-pins or hair-pins? Should they bind the hair with ribbons?' I have replied to them as I thought fit, but I put the matter before you also. I think that neither of the two things is necessary. At least they were not in the past. In the West the women do their hair in different styles so that every woman needs a great number of hair-pins and ribbons without number. But we do not care for outward adornment and it does not befit us. It is our duty to save every pie that we can, like misers; for the money which is given to us is not our property, we are only its trustees and, therefore, we are entitled to use out of it only just enough to feed and clothe the body. I, therefore, believe

[1] A cattle-breeding community

that hair-pins, etc., have no place in our life. We should seek our happiness and that of our children only in such manner as befits us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 9091. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

487. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

May 4, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

I thank you for your prompt reply[1] of 2nd instant in connection with my four friends and co-workers in the Belgaum Central Prison.[2] I thought that you would give me their weights. I would still like to have them for additional satisfaction.

I am not free from anxiety yet about Kaka Kalelkar. He often suffers from pain in the spine. From the diet scale allowed to him I miss butter altogether. You may remember that he had 4 oz. of butter allowed to him here in addition to milk, bread and vegetables, and I know that he was able to take all that butter without suffering any harm and he was able to put on weight and feel energy coming to him, whereas when he was received here he felt weak and could with difficulty take regular exercise. I would therefore like to know what his weight is now and whether he suffers from any pain in the spine. The letter he was permitted to write to me distinctly states that he had that pain at the time of writing, i.e., on 13th April last.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] *Vide* Appendix VIII.
[2] *Vide* pp. 304-5 and 340-1.

488. LETTER TO PERCY W. BARTLETT

May 4, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your letter only last Saturday[1] together with the Poet's draft appeal[2]. I do not know that you expect me to say anything now. But this I can say, that I should yield to no one in my desire for conciliation and peace. You may therefore depend on my doing nothing that will prevent them. Consistently with national honour, I would do everything that would promote conciliation and peace. More I may not say from behind the prison wall.

I am glad you and the other friends[3] were able to visit India and hope that you were none the worse for its climate.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. I, p. 193

489. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

May 4, 1932

CHI. RAMDAS,

From Narandas's letter received yesterday, I learnt that Nimu had returned to the Ashram.

I am afraid I may not have been able to explain in my last letter what I wanted to say. It has always been my view that

[1] April 30. On April 29, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, in his speech in the Commons had said: "There clearly cannot be any question of co-operation with anyone associated with civil disobedience. If Mr. Gandhi shows a disposition to restore the relations which existed at the Round Table Conference, he will not find the slightest difficulty in conveying the fact to the Government without any intermediary. The Government will consider the position thus created. But one thing is quite clear, that there will be no question of making a bargain with the Congress as a condition of its co-operation" (*The Hindu*, 24-6-1932).

[2] *Vide* Appendix IX.

[3] Members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, who had visited India in March 1932

a satyagrahi should never fight about his food. He should thank God for whatever he gets and eat it.

The jailor is the master of a prisoner's body. Hence, a satyagrahi should accept whatever food is served to him so long as he can do so with self-respect and the food is not unclean or of a kind which he cannot eat. He may eat it if he thinks that he can digest it, otherwise he may throw it away or return it if he has not already started eating it. In this age, the laws of good health are generally observed in fixing prisoners' food. However, what should one do if they give only *rotla* and water?

One may discuss the matter courteously with the official but one cannot fight about it.

People can get many things, have got many things, by creating trouble for the authorities. But we ought not to adopt such methods.

I, therefore, believe that you should not protest at all regarding the *bhaji* which is being served. Those who wish may eat it and others may leave it. We should thank God even if we get only *rotlas* and dal.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 135

490. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

May 5, 1932

BHAI NANABHAI,

Thinking about the matter objectively, I am indifferent whether Manilal and Sushila come or do not come. In view of his vow, it would be good if they come but from the point of view of the health of all three[1] of them it would be better if they do not come. Only they can tell how strictly they interpret his vow. However, from what I know of Manilal's nature I guess that he would not put an objective and strict interpretation on his vow and Sushila also, willingly or unwillingly, would identify herself with his point of view. This is my analysis of their character. They are both good and simple-minded so that, wherever they are, they will take up some work of service and do their best.

As for revising *Anasaktiyoga*, I need the presence of Kishorelal. Unless somebody wakes me up, I shall regard the book with a closed mind. I shall see what Mahadev can do. If I

[1] Manilal, Sushila and their daughter

get Kishorelal's notes, I will certainly go through them carefully and make whatever changes I can think of. I must say you have planted your feet in a good many directions. Does Surendra maintain his weight? Do you hear from Tara? Regards to you both from all of us here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6683. Also C.W. 4328. Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

491. LETTER TO IBRAHIMJI RAJKOTWALA

May 5, 1932

I got your letter. If you ask reason for proof of the existence of God, what proof can reason give since God is above all reason? For, if you say that nothing is beyond rational explanation, you will certainly run into difficulties. If we give the highest place to reason, we shall be faced with serious difficulties. Our own *atman* is beyond reason. People have indeed tried to prove its existence with logical arguments, as they have tried to prove the existence of God. But he who knows God and the *atman* with his intellect only does not know them at all. Reason may be a useful instrument of knowledge at one stage. But anybody who stops there will never enjoy the benefits of true spiritual knowledge, in the same way that intellectual knowledge of the benefits of eating food does not by itself help one to enjoy those benefits. God or the *atman* is not an object of knowledge. He Himself is the Knower. That is why we say that He is above reason. There are two stages of knowledge of God. The first is faith, and the second and the last is first-hand experience to which faith leads. All great teachers of the world have testified to their having had such experience, and people whom the world would ordinarily dismiss as fools have also demonstrated their faith. If we have faith, like theirs, one day we may have first-hand experience too. If a person sees somebody with his eyes but, being deaf, cannot hear him and then complains that he had not heard him, he would not be justified. Similarly, to say that reason cannot know God betrays ignorance. Just as hearing is not the function of the eyes, so also knowing God is not the function of the senses or of reason. To know Him a different kind of faculty is required, and this is unshakable faith. We know

from experience that reason can be all too easily deceived. But we have not known anybody, howsoever mighty he may be, who could deceive true faith.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 136-7

492. *TELEGRAM TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA*[1]

May 6, 1932

WE WERE ALL TOUCHED LEARN GANGABEHN'S DEATH. AM HAPPY THAT SHE LIVED WELL AND DIED WELL WITH FAITH EVERLASTING. NO WONDER TOTARAMJI[2] IS HAPPY.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 138

493. *LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU*

May 6, 1932

I do not know that I would share Lilamani's enthusiasm.[3] Chivalry is made of sterner stuff. Chivalrous knight is he who is exquisitely correct in his conduct towards perfect strangers who are in need of help, but who can make no return to him and who are unable even to mutter a few words of thanks. But of these things some other day and under other auspices.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 102

494. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

May 6, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter was received at the expected time.

Do you remember the frail little wife of Dahyabhai—Yashoda. She died on Sunday. It was a deliverance for her.

[1] This was sent to the Ashram on receipt of the addressee's letter informing Gandhiji about the death of Gangadevi Sanadhya.

[2] Totaram Sanadhya, Gangadevi's husband

[3] In the source, Mahadev Desai explains: "Sarojinidevi had written to her daughter Lila that she was permitted after her arrest to sleep in the Taj Mahal [Hotel] and this reminded Lila of mediaeval chivalry."

She had fits and had almost lost her memory. This means additional burden for Vallabhbhai. For she has left behind her a bright boy about five years. But he has broad shoulders.

My weight oscillates between 104 and 106. I am, therefore, not making any change. I am trying to replace almond paste with ground-nut paste. If it agrees as well as almond, it will be good. The others are also keeping well.

Magan wheel[1] was received yesterday. I am going to try it. It will enable me to give complete rest to the left elbow. And Prabhudas will be delighted when he learns that I am actually trying his invention. Of course my recent drawing [of] the thread with the right hand will come in very useful.

I am glad you have begun to use the left hand in place of the right. It must be done not merely for writing. Try to eat also with the left hand. No special effort, save a little thought, seems to be necessary.

I am glad you had a few days with Sarojini[2] and that you were able to serve her.

What I have said about my being a hindrance is perfectly true. I may help to start the thing, but, not being able to live up to it must hinder further progress. The ideal of voluntary poverty is most attractive. We have made some progress, but my utter inability to realize it fully in my own life has made it difficult at the Ashram for the others to do much. They have the will but no finished object-lesson. We have two delightful kittens. They learn their lessons from the mute conduct of their mother, who never has them out of her sight. Practice is the thing. And just now I fail so hopelessly in so many things. But it is no use mourning over the inevitable.

I have just had a card from Narandas saying that Gangadevi is no more. She died cheerfully with Ramanama on her lips. She and Totaramji were worthy of the Ashram.

Perhaps we shall meet soon.[3]

Love from us all.

BAPU

[1] "Spinning-wheel with two spindles which are propelled by a foot pedal. As Bapu used only one spindle, one of his arms could, therefore, be given complete rest"—Mirabehn

[2] "Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had been arrested and brought to the Arthur Road Jail. We had but a few fleeting days together. She was transferred to the women's jail in the Yeravda Central Prison"—Mirabehn

[3] "My three months' sentence was drawing to a close"—Mirabehn

[PS.]

I spun 24 rounds on Magan wheel. Narandas asks whether you will be able to see me on 18th. So far as I am concerned, of course you can.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6219. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9685

495. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

May 7, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

I observe from Kaka Kalelkar's letter to me that though he and Sjts. Narahari Parikh and Prabhudas Gandhi were put together at Visapur, they were separated on being admitted to the Belgaum Central Prison. They are all inmates of the Ashram. Prabhudas Gandhi was Kaka Kalelkar's pupil and Narahari Parikh his assistant and colleague. I do not know that there was any reason for separating them from one another. If there was none, you will perhaps agree that in the present state of the health of both Kaka and Prabhudas Gandhi, if all the three are together they can be mutually helpful.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

496. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

May 7, 1932

DEAR COLONEL DOYLE,

I wish to bring to your notice a matter that has reached the point of exasperation. Over two months ago Sardar Vallabhbhai wrote two letters, one to his son at Bombay and one to Mr. G. V. Mavalankar at Ahmedabad, both of which were of a business type. They were duly authorized, but never reached the addressees. On March 26th Sjt. Mahadev Desai wrote his monthly letter to his wife at the Ashram at Sabarmati. The letter never reached her. On the 28th ultimo I wrote, by permission, a letter addressed to the Ashram and meant for an erring boy of mine. It was a most important letter in answer to his. The letter was not deli-

vered at the Ashram, though subsequent letters were delivered. Almost invariably the Ashram post reaches the Ashram two or three days after the due day of delivery. I infer from this that the letters are delayed, where they are not withheld entirely, by some authority. I know that correspondence of civil resisters is under strict censorship. I have nothing to say against it. But the correspondence sent from a prison, duly franked by prison authorities would, I should imagine, be free from further censorship and consequent delay or danger of being withheld altogether. I do not write letters uselessly and hope I am meticulous about observing the terms under which I am permitted to write these letters. If they require a double censorship, it may be well to let us know. If they are withheld even after being passed by prison authorities I think it is due to us that we should know at least the fact of detention. The letter that I sent to my son was designed to affect the future course of his conduct and it had attached to it an original letter which my son had sent for my inspection and which he desired should be returned to him. I have no desire whatsoever to write a single line that I would not like any Government official to see. But I do feel hurt when even letters sent by prisoners that are held to be unobjectionable by prison authorities are delayed or intercepted in course of transmission.

I should, therefore, thank you if you would kindly enquire of proper authorities as to the fate of the letters in question. I should be glad if it were discovered that my suspicions were groundless and that there had been no interference with this correspondence, and that the delays had been accidental and that the missing letters had been found and delivered to the addressees.

Yours sincerely,

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(30), Pt. I, pp. 247-8

497. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

May 7, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

If we make it a rule to draw up a balance-sheet of our spiritual progress from time to time, we shall be able to get rid of unnecessary fears and appear to the world as we really are. Obviously, this is true only about sincere people. Those who are insincere will not be able to keep up the practice of drawing up such a balance-sheet. They will find it impossible.

I believe everything you say about Narandas. He ought not to take up work beyond his strength. No one should do that. But generally man deceives himself. He is generous towards himself, and when he has done a small thing he believes that he has exerted himself overmuch. Ordinarily, therefore, when someone works hard I do not feel inclined to dissuade him from doing so. But Narandas's way is different. He always takes too much work upon himself. Since he generally does his work in time, a stranger may not perhaps see how much he had worked. Hence it is but proper that Narandas should not undertake new burdens. I have written to him to that effect.[1] You should keep a watch.

My suggestion about a balance-sheet is not likely to make anyone mechanical in his or her work. If any person living in the Ashram becomes so, I would blame our method of running it. I know that that method is not perfect. But no one living in the Ashram has become mechanical in his or her work, and many who were mechanical have come to be filled with new life. I infer from this that our method must be at least 51 per cent effective. Those who are in charge of the various activities in the Ashram are not experts in their respective fields. It is not their fault that they are not. But it has always happened that the Ashram has either undertaken some new type of activity or has decided to carry on a traditional activity in a new manner, and, therefore, it has had to train its own experts. This has resulted in some unnecessary expenditure of time and money, and despite that the Ashram has not always done its work so

[1] *Vide* pp. 414-5.

well as to win praise. The Ashram, however, exists not to win praise but to serve. If it does the work of service so well that it wins praise for it, we may feel happy. But, even if it is criticized, we should continue to serve. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that, as we become progressively more efficient, we shall be able to do more work and shall feel the burden of work less and less. Here is a recent experience. When I started the practice of rotating the wheel with the left hand, on the first day I could spin only 93 rounds. I also took more time and got more tired. When my efficiency had increased relatively, I could spin more than 200 rounds in less time and felt less fatigued. I have now started spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel. Yesterday I spun 24 rounds and spent much time. Today I spun 56 rounds in less time. The fatigue, too, was less. What is true about an individual and his small task, is also true about an organization and its big undertakings. "Yoga is skill in work."[1] Work here means service, *yajna*. All our difficulties arise from our inefficiency. If we become efficient, what seems a hardship today will become a source of joy. I am convinced that in a well-organized set-up based on right principles, no tensions should be felt.

You have joined the Ashram to acquire this efficiency. You will not learn it from anyone. Everyone has to acquire it from the atmosphere in the Ashram. If any person like you does not acquire it, he or she will not remain in the Ashram till the end. I am not talking about those who have no ambition. They will perhaps remain. Since the Ashram is really an institution based on the principle of freedom, everyone in it may rise as high as he or she wishes. But no one will be able to help a person who does not aspire to rise. It is for you to create the atmosphere in which you can work well. You can attract your friend to the Ashram. Really speaking, however, that would be self-centredness on your part. All those who live there are your friends. Give them what you have and receive from them what they have. If you believe that you have nothing to learn from others except from one or two persons, you are sunk in the well of self-delusion. I think there is none in this world from whom we may not learn something.

What you write about Ramakrishna[2] is very likely to be true. I do not regard myself as having attained any degree of spiri-

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 50

[2] Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

tual realization, and I am sure, therefore, that I make mistakes again and again. But being innocent mistakes, they seem to have done no harm so far. I, therefore, continue on my path with an untroubled mind and also draw co-workers into my experiments.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Passive exercises help the weak; for example, massage, *ardhashirshasana*[1], *ardhasarvasana*[2], lying down and raising the legs or the hands slowly upwards. In all these, the patient remains passive and gives his or her mental co-operation. Do you follow this?

Prayers have often been attacked, but they have been kept up for 16 years. How much time do they take? How much of that time can be saved? Anyone who accepts the necessity of prayers will not grudge the time given to them. We can point out a drawback in everyone. On the whole, however, our prayers seem all right. For my information, though, what change do you desire?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: 10284. Also C.W. 6732. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

498. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

May 7, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

The report is excellent. It is not proper to take the name Kishorikant,[3] and the motive also behind taking such a name is unworthy. It would have been better if the article about me had not been written. But now you need not feel sorry for having written it. You should not write any such article in future. Your possessing books does not violate the vow of non-possession. They are not "yours". This is also true about slips of paper.

There is no universal rule that a person who has no children has an unfeeling heart. We can try to know God through the

[1&2] Yogic postures

[3] The addressee wanted to adopt a new name in memory of his deceased wife, Rajkishori.

study of chemistry, etc. But that is possible only for a few. Study of the sky is quite easy. The effect of a diary depends on the kind of diary it is.

BAPU

PS.

The report about Hindi is excellent. Who is in charge of the sales section?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4797. Also C.W. 4974. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

499. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

May 8, 1932

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

Your letter smacks of a complaint that Narandas does not listen to you. Please do not think so. Your duty ends when you have informed [him]. You told him without expecting a response, didn't you?

APU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 347. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

500. LETTER TO BENARSILAL AND RUKMINI BAZAJ

May 8, 1932

CHI. BENARSI,

I read your remarks. You must have read Father's letter addressed to me. It was first received there and then redirected to me. I did not understand it clearly.

CHI. RUKMINI,

I got your letter. As soon as you came down to the plains, both of you lost health again. Does that mean that you should permanently stay at a hill station? I hope that you have completely recovered now. Do you take out Madhav for a walk every day? See that you do not let the child's health suffer for any reason. Write to me regularly. If you follow Mirabehn's practice and fix a day for writing to me, you will not have to try to remember.

PS.

You must have heard about Gangadevi's death.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9442. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

501. A LETTER

May 8, 1932

We violate it whenever we eat anything for the pleasure it gives. To observe the vow of non-indulgence of the palate, we should eat, from among things acceptable to us, only as much as is necessary to keep our body healthy and strong. If we observe this vow, we shall become healthy and remain so, shall find it easier to observe *brahmacharya* and acquire control over the mind in other ways too.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9087. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

502. A LETTER

May 8, 1932

When Father asked you to go, it was your duty to obey him. Not everybody likes to live in the Ashram. Only those like the Ashram who like freedom with self-restraint.

True mercy has never done harm to anybody in this world. We do not know the real facts about Prithviraj and, therefore, cannot say anything about his case. In such matters, we should not cite examples from the past. If we can test a medicine today, why do we want to know what effect it had in some case in the past?

From Gujarati: C.W. 9097. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

503. LETTER TO DURGA M. DESAI

May 8, 1932

CHI. DURGA,

You should not read *Saket* so that you may cry with sorrow as you read it. Even Urmila's protestations teach spiritual wisdom. We should read the poem for its glorification of Rama. Moreover, what comparison can there be between Urmila's separation from Lakshman and Durga's from Mahadev? Yours is no separation at all. You can write to him, see him if you wish to and get news about him from time to time. Urmila had no such consolation. How can we compare a forest with a jail-temple, and fourteen years with two years?

BAPU

[PS.]

You may eat spices if without them you do not keep good health.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9485

504. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

May 8, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I am thinking whether or no I should continue to write to you. But since you wrote a postcard to me, I write this. I should like you to pay a visit to Dhulia[1] without waiting for a reply. But you know best whether you can spare time now.

BAPU

[PS.]

Write the essay[2] with the utmost care, and not simply as a task.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1836

[1] To the Dhulia District Jail to meet Pyarelal and Gulzarilal Nanda

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Kusum Desai", p. 281.

505. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

May 8, 1932

CHI. MANI (PARIKH),

I was glad that you came and saw me. It is true that I could not talk with the children. But you know that this is a prison. How long could we go on talking? You should give up your weakness. You should not let tears be seen in your eyes. Write to Shankarlal and tell him that I was unhappy that I could not see him. But that could not be helped. I was very glad that Babu also came and saw me. I could have no fun with him either.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5968. Also C.W. 3285. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

506. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

May 8, 1932

CHI. MANU,

I have already described my experiences in England which were worth describing. After all, can I describe things as well as you do? If, however, you improve your handwriting, I will think about some other experiences in England and write about them.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7429. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

507. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

May 8, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

You should try and understand the virtues of Mother India, and then cultivate them in yourself by degrees.[1]

If we think over everything which happens in the course of even one day, we feel giddy. If, then, we try to recollect every-

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Pushpa S. Patel", pp. 266 and 358.

thing that happened during a number of years, would we not become mad?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3988. Also C.W. 34. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

508. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

May 8, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

Your handwriting this time was a little better. If you take sufficient care every time, it is bound to improve. I cannot answer questions about what this or the other thing is made of. You should put such questions to Premabehn or somebody else there.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9427. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

509. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

May 8, 1932

MISS RAIHANA,

What have you been doing, sitting idle there? What a teacher you are! I have now procured a copy-book for improving my handwriting. I will start doing exercises in it from today or tomorrow. I have also been studying the Urdu readers. The thing is that I am ambitious to do much but can spare only limited time. Let us see. All I do I do in the name of God and for His work. He will lead me where He wishes. You know what you sang the other day:

> Open your eyes a little
> You careless one, turn your mind to God.
> What you would tomorrow, do today
> What you would today, do right now.

I am of course trying to do the thing just now. It is in His hands to lead me to the goal.[1]

I will not write more of the Urdu exercise today. In the midst of several other things to do, I cannot find for it the time

[1] Up to this the letter is in Urdu.

I would wish to give. I hope the climate of Mount Abu has benefited Father, you and all others. Does Hamida still have difficulty about [digesting] food? How many of you are at Mount Abu? I have never seen it in my life.

Do you know very well Dahyabhai, son of uncle Sardar? Father of course does. His wife, Yashoda, died nine days ago, leaving a smeil child behind. Dahyabhai has been much upset. He was here to see us on Saturday. Tell Father about this if he does not already know.

If you have all returned to Baroda by now, find out from among Father's books Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam* and send it for Sardar. Mahadev and I have read it, but Sardar has not.

All three of us are happy here. It is hotter here than it usually is at this time of the year.

Did Sohaila accompany, or has she accompanied, you to Abu? Kamal must be growing fast. Give my dearest love to him.

To all of you, our *salaam*, *aadaab*, *vandemataram* or blessings as may be proper and fitting, and to Father bhrrr from me.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9643

510. CLEANLINESS, TRUTHFULNESS, PURITY, NEATNESS[1]

May 9, 1932

Now that I have succeeded today in acquiring over the Magan spinning-wheel brought by Dhiru enough elementary control to satisfy me, I feel sufficiently free in my mind to pay attention to the appearance of the wheel. Vallabhbhai's sharp eyes detected a spider's web on it, and he immediately joked about it. I discovered now the real source of Manibehn's great love of neatness. The envelopes in which I seal the letters for the Ashram are an illustration of this quality of Vallabhbhai's. Anybody who has not seen these envelopes should do so immediately. Along with neatness, they exemplify great economy. The letters which I write from here do not require very long envelopes. It will, therefore, be observed that two envelopes are made out of the original one. The brown paper which comes here in the form of packets, etc., is preserved and then used for making new flaps for the envelopes.

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi', 4/9-5-1932; *vide* the following item.

This was by way of introduction. I noted Vallabhbhai's comment, but at the moment I was impatient to try the spinning-wheel. The doctor had been advising me not to use the left hand even for turning the wheel. Hence I thought that, if I could rotate the wheel with either foot, probably I would not have to drop spinning for a single day. In my impatience to acquire control in managing the spinning-wheel as soon as possible, I let the web remain where it was. But I felt confident today that I would be able to work with my right hand, and so began observing the poor condition of the spinning-wheel. I saw that there was not only one web, but that there were webs in seven or eight places. And the entire spinning-wheel was covered with dust. The brass spindle-bearers were covered with a sticky layer of grease and dust. There was plenty of dust on the wooden boards too. This should be deemed unpardonable. The spinning-wheel is the divine weapon of *Daridranarayana*. It is the chief means of worship. By neglecting it and allowing it to be covered with dust, we show lack of reverence for Him. Generally, temples, mosques and other places of worship are kept clean. But we believe that every spot on the earth is as sacred as a temple. There is no place anywhere where God is not present. To us, therefore, our bed-rooms, dining rooms, libraries, lavatories—all these are sacred as temples and should be kept clean as such. All the more so a spinning-wheel. If we really believe in its power, none of us, from the very young to the old, would ever let a spinning-wheel remain unclean.

I have already referred once to the cat's love of cleanliness. Recently I observed more evidence of it. She gave birth to two kittens about a month and a half ago. Their ways are wonderful. The three are rarely found separated. The mother-cat lets the kitten suck whenever they indicate their desire. The two cling to her and suck at the same time. It is a sublime sight. The mother has no feeling of false shame about the matter. She does not perform all actions in public and anywhere. As soon as the kitten could walk and play, she taught them the procedure to be followed for defecation. She withdrew to a quiet spot where the earth was soft and dug out a small hollow. She put the kitten in position over the hollow, afterwards covered the excreta with earth and made the spot as clean as it was before. The kittens now follow that procedure every day. They are a brother and a sister. Four days ago, one of them was trying to dig a hollow in the earth, but the ground was rather hard. The other one went to its help and the two together dug out a

hollow of the required size. After defecation, they covered up the excreta with earth and left the place. Why should we not willingly do what these creatures—even the little ones—do?

The four words in the title are intended to suggest the same meaning. Since we are conscious of ourselves as souls, our cleanliness must be both internal and external. The former means truthfulness. Truthfulness is the essence of purity, and is also another name for neatness. If we are neat and tidy outwardly but have unclean minds, we make a false show or are guilty of pure hypocrisy, or that may be a sign of our lustfulness. Thus, for men and women who strive to lead a life of self-control, outward neatness is of value only if it is a sign of inner purity.

Our holiest temple is our body. We should take care not to let it be infected with any impurity from outside. We should not sully the purity of the mind with evil thoughts. Anybody who follows this ideal of cleanliness will display neatness and tidiness in everything he does. That would be his instinctive behaviour.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

511. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

May 4/9, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter. Both the letter and the accompanying comments of Premabehn I found very useful. I think you have become somewhat impatient. The one virtue of your character which I value most is that you never undertake any work beyond your strength, do thoroughly whatever you take up and never lose your peace of mind. We see a combination of these three virtues in very few persons. I think you have shown it in your character. It is now very necessary to take care that you do not lose this precious asset through impatience. Everybody is not capable of doing everything. We see a few persons who do many things but most people can do only a few things. It is enough that you belong to the former class. Provided you take care of your health and preserve your peace of mind and remain cheerful, I will say nothing against your taking upon yourself as much responsibility as you wish. But one forgets this condition when one becomes impatient. Maganlal forgot it and he paid a heavy price for it. We should learn from his mistake. Premabehn believes

that you have taken upon yourself such a heavy burden that your body cannot bear the strain for long.[1] Kusum also seems to agree with her. Think over this and make whatever changes may be necessary. If you have been hasty about anybody else, too, in any matter, you should rectify your mistake. I think the following rules should be observed.

1. Everyone should get one hour which he may spend as he likes. Nobody should spend it in any work or activity which is part of his daily routine.

2. The period of silence at prayer-time should be increased from one minute to five minutes. One person should keep his eyes open and, when the five minutes are over, give a mild stroke on the bell.

3. Spinning, etc., should be done only during the time left out of compulsory bodily labour like cooking, cleaning lavatories, helping in the dairy, working on the farm, washing and bathing, etc. All these are essential activities. We should so arrange our daily programme that we are able to do full justice to them.

4. Sufficient time should be allowed to a person to leave one duty and take up another.

5. If, as a result of arranging the work in this manner, it becomes necessary to engage paid labourers, you must engage a sufficient number of them. But we should not treat them as labourers. We should see to it that they get proper accommodation and clothes to wear and gradually we should draw them towards the Ashram rules. These rules should be explained to them before they are engaged.

6. If you can reduce the activities and do without paid labourers, that would certainly be the best course.

7. Everybody, whether grown-up or young, must go to bed as soon as it is nine. Children under 12 should go to bed at eight.

You may revise these rules from time to time in the light of your experience there. Though I think about these matters from here and raise issues for you to think over, you should carry out my suggestions only to the extent practicable. I hope you do not discharge any labourers who are prepared to observe our conditions. Though they work for wages, I regard them as inmates of the Ashram.

I had a long talk with Kusum, and so I do not say anything about the matter here. Giridhari came and saw me recently. Manibehn Parikh also was one of the party. I cannot describe

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Premabehn Kantak", p. 404.

Dhiru's health as satisfactory. I got Dr. Sharma's books. I also got *Jodanikosh*[1], etc. The yarn spun by Chhakkaddas appears very clean and even in texture like silk. I see that he has taken great care in spinning it. Mahadev thinks that the count probably does not exceed 20. I have not examined the yarn carefully from that point of view. But even if Mahadev is right, I would rate yarn of 20 counts which is strong and even in texture much higher than yarn of 40 counts which is weak and uneven in texture.

I am glad that Nimu has returned. Will her mother stay there? I should be happy if she does. Ask Nimu to write to me every week without fail. If she does, she will also be able to give some news which I may convey to Ramdas.

Jamna must run away to Bombay. What is the name of the doctor who extracted Mathew's tooth? I think Mathew should be permitted to go and visit his father. It seems to me that by and by he will become a fine worker. He is good-natured and gentle and his intentions are always good.

I have already written[2] to you that Gangabehn again requires asafoetida powder and *chaiarj*, the same quantity as you sent before. Mahadev got the parcel addressed to him. It seems certain now that the packet[3] received from Jethalal has been lost. What did it contain? Who has signed the receipt?

If it is the rule in a jail to handcuff a prisoner when he is taken out and if a prisoner is so handcuffed he should not protest but, on the contrary, should cheerfully submit to being handcuffed. This has been my view from the very beginning. When I was taken out of jail in Pretoria and brought to a court to give evidence in a case, I was handcuffed. I welcomed that, for I did not regard myself as different from other prisoners and never desired treatment different from theirs. Today also I do not desire such treatment. That there should be improvement in the treatment of prisoners is a separate issue, and the change should be brought about mostly by the efforts of people outside. Prisoners can bring about a change only by obeying the harshest prison rules. There is only one exception to this, which is really not an exception, namely, that a prisoner ought not to submit to anything which is humiliating. The law does not permit humiliation of prisoners. This may be taken as my general view. Only

[1] The standard dictionary of Gujarati orthography published by the Gujarat Vidyapith.

[2] *Vide* p. 388.

[3] Containing a report of the khadi centre at Anantpur

those who had taken a vow to spin regularly before the struggle started may insist on being permitted to spin in jail. There are very few such persons. I cannot write more than this on this subject. I have already written to you about Parvati. You did all right in giving one hundred and fifty rupees to Champa. We cannot be very rigid in such matters. I have not received the cotton yet. There is no hurry, of course, since I have already received four pounds from Lady Vithaldas.

May 9, 1932

I got the cotton. The *papayas* were excellent. The bread also was very good. The cotton parcel cost a little too much. But that is bound to happen sometimes. The machine for crushing almonds was used the very next day after it arrived. It saved much labour. I have written[1] about cleanliness this time and what I have said should be carefully borne in mind. Why did Dhiru bring the spinning-wheel in such dirty condition? Try and find out if Gangadevi gave any personal service to Totaram which some other woman also can give, and appoint someone for the purpose. Are his requirements of food being looked after? Jamna should leave and go away to Bombay without delay. A list of 38 letters accompanies.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8225. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

512. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

May 9, 1932

Bismillah

CHIRANJIVI RAIHANA,

Please do not laugh at the sight of this! Remember I am writing a copy-book, I am trying to learn to write exactly as children do. Just when, tired with other work, I had started writing this, your much-awaited letter arrived. Father and Mother are both very clever people and they know that my views very much resemble theirs. That is why they ask you to follow my advice. They have thus contrived to deprive you of your freedom. And this innocent, crazy girl is now a prisoner of old people. Let us see what happens. After all, it does not matter that

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

people like you and me are always drawn into their net. The visit to Mount Abu seems to have done you no good.[1]

I hope this is enough for today. I take a great deal of time to write even such a hand as this. God has given you the gift of singing *bhajans*. Go on doing that, serve your elders as best as you can, and live contented. Contentment also is a form of service in itself. Send me what Pashabhai has written. There is no harm in his going to America. It will be enough if he takes every step after careful thought. Moreover, you are there to guide him. Tell Hamida to write to me as soon as she leaves. I had expected a letter from Rohini. Many blessings to Kamalmiyan. Many . . .[2]. I hope some day to give him a slap or two. My bhrrr to the white beard. Tell all that we think of them every day. Some topic or other always crops up. It is like what Hazarat says in his *ghazal*. Even if one tries not to think about a thing, one does think about it. Some things one cannot remember though one would like to, and some others one cannot forget though one tries to. He never lets our wishes be fulfilled. I was glad that you wrote the *ghazal* in the Gujarati script.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Uncle Sardar has made it his occupation to add to the country's wealth by making such envelopes. Did I tell you this before?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9642

513. *LETTER TO TOTARAM SANADHYA*

May 9, 1932

BHAI TOTARAMJI,

I am overjoyed to learn that you are not grief-stricken over Gangadevi's death.[3] The grief can be only out of self-interest. As for Gangadevi, she is released from pain and has undoubtedly attained a nobler state. We all are thankful to you. Chhaganlal and Gangabehn have expressed sorrow. Chhaganlal grieves for her, remembering all her kindness to his children.

[1] Up to this the letter is in Urdu.
[2] Omission as in the source
[3] *Vide* "Telegram to Gangabehn Vaidya", p. 400.

To me Gangadevi was the personification of renunciation, and her renunciation was combined with detachment which made it enduring. It was an example to be emulated by us all. I have found in you the quality of detachment. Do tell me if there is any exaggeration in my statement. And if what I say is correct, send short memoirs of Gangadevi.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2531

514. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA N. KHARE

May 10, 1932

CHI. RAMBHAU,

You now seem to be doing your duties very well. Give complete rest to the arm which has sustained injury. I have now acquired fairly good control over the Magan spinning-wheel. Truthfulness is the first step in culture.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 292. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

515. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

May 10, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

We should not follow anybody. If you wish to get your hair cropped, you should go ahead and do so. You will not then feel the weight of hair on your head. Your time will be saved, and there will be no more dirt in the hair. However, if you wish you may let your hair remain. Don't mind if people call you a bear. That is only a good-humoured jest.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9443. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

516. A LETTER

May 10, 19

When deciding what one's duty is, many questions m
arise. But when examining the teaching of the *Gita*, we ha
only to consider what Arjuna's question was. If a teacher go
beyond the scope of the question put to him, he would be
bad teacher, for the questioner's attention would be fixed on
question and he would be in no fit state of mind to listen
other things. The discussion may even be beyond his capac
and may, therefore, bore him. Further, the reply to his questi
is likely to get lost in the discussion about irrelevant issues, in t
same way that plants of grains in a field sometimes get buried unc
the weeds which grow round them. From this point of vie
Krishna's reply to Arjuna is perfect. And when we leave Chapte
and come to Chapter II, we find that it breathes the pure spi
of ahimsa. We should not, believing or claiming that Sl
Krishna is the most perfect avatar of God, expect that we c
get from his words a simple reply to every question that m
arise in our minds in the same manner that we can find t
meaning of a word by looking up a dictionary. Even if we cou
find such replies, that would do us harm, for in that case r
body would strive for further advance or new discoveries. Ma
reason would simply atrophy. Thus, the people of every a
should strive to solve the problems of that age by their own ha
labour and *tapascharya*. We should, therefore, try to solve t
problems which arise in the present age in regard to war a
other issues with the help of the principles enunciated in a nol
work like the *Gita*. But even such help will be negligible. V
shall get real help only from what we learn through *tap*
charya. Books on Ayurveda describe the properties of innumeral
herbs and plants. We may read those descriptions for guidan
But the knowledge so gained will be useless, may even be burde
some, if the properties attributed to those herbs and plants do r
pass the test of actual experience. We have to seek solutions
the many difficult problems of life in exactly the same mann
If you still wish to ask me any questions on this subject, please d

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 146-7

517. *LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

May 11, 1932

CHI. DEVDAS,

Yesterday, the 10th, I got the letter you wrote on the 1st. It was not delayed here. According to me, this delay is not too long in the case of a prisoner. After all, what is the value of his time? $\frac{13}{12}$ rupees per hour, for I think daily expense on account of a prisoner comes to Rs. 13. I think personally that the weakness of my hands is a symptom of old age. Don't most old people suffer from some weakness or other? We should remember that this weakness was there even when I used to take milk. Had it not been so, I would have perhaps got alarmed and resumed taking milk. Has any of my experiments done me harm in the long run? The only such case which I can remember is that of the last experiment, that is, Gopalrao's experiment.[1] I was hasty in starting it and waited too long before giving it up. I persisted in it even though people were falling ill one after another. From the economic point of view the experiment was a good one and Gopalrao had great faith in it. Excepting this one, my impression about all other experiments is that I had benefited from them physically and spiritually. This time I am wide awake. I don't attach too much importance to the experiment. After I am released from jail, I think I shall have to take milk and, therefore, here I wish to do without it only if I can do so without harm. There is not the slightest cause for worrying about my health, as I have maintained my weight.

I will certainly go through the Urdu books which you have mentioned, when they come. This time I had intended to take up Urdu at a somewhat later stage since I wished to do some other reading before. But Raihana began writing a few Urdu sentences in her letters to me and I thought that it would be good to reply to her in Urdu. By and by I appointed her to be my Urdu teacher, and asked her to send me the corrections in the Urdu I wrote every week. Of course this cannot satisfy me. Hence I took out from the jail library here Urdu readers and began to study them. As my Urdu handwriting is very bad, I have now

[1] The reference is to the unfired food experiment in 1929; *vide* Vol. XLI.

procured a copy-book and some tracing paper. I am now trying to see how deep I can go into this study. On the one hand is this Urdu, and on the other the Magan spinning-wheel. I am now giving my whole self to the Magan wheel since I had already decided to please Prabhudas and to test and utilize his abilities, and since to add to this the doctors here insisted on my giving complete rest to the left hand, which was possible only if I drew the yarn with the right hand and rotated the wheel with my foot. I find it difficult to move the wheel with the foot and to draw the yarn with the right hand. But I am confident that I shall succeed. Some time ago I felt that I had acquired the necessary control, but lost it, today again I feel that I have partly regained it, though spinning in this manner takes quite a lot of time. And third is Ruskin. The study of economics, which was the fourth, has been suspended for the present. The fifth thing is Maithilisharan's *Saket*, which I wish to read carefully. Mahadev and I have already read it once, and Vallabhbhai also has read it. It seems to be a fine work. I am sure if you secure a copy there and read it, you also will like it. For you it will be very easy reading. I shall send the book to you from here if you cannot get a copy from the Kalyan office. And the sixth is watching the stars. I have taken this up quite seriously. During the day I read something on the subject and at night observe the particular stars carefully enough to be able to recognize them afterwards. I wonder why I did not take serious interest in this subject earlier. I always wished to do so, but the desire was not sufficiently strong to make me take up the pursuit immediately. But now I see that everybody ought to cultivate as much acquaintance with the denizens of the sky as he conveniently can. I believe that millions of people can, without much difficulty, acquire enough knowledge of them for their own satisfaction and raise themselves spiritually. Anybody who tries to study the stars from a spiritual point of view will easily experience true joy of the heart and will be filled with greater devotion to God. I do not know whether this is true of all, but I do know that such was the effect on me and that is why I have kept up the practice. Probably you get no opportunity to see the sky at night. When do they lock you up? We three sleep directly under the sky. Opposite we see the Venus shining, to our right is the Great Bear, and to the left the *Swastika* (the Southern Cross). Leo roars right over our heads and Jupiter, too, is straight above us. I read in Gujarati Hasan Nizami's *Kavan Charit*. It did not make on me the impression it did on you. When I read it I was not prejudi-

ced against him, still I did not feel that his motive was pure. His language seems to be good, but for anybody who wants to read Urdu books for the sake of language there are many others equally good. If one does not mind difficult words, Shibli's language has no small power. I am sure you will like Upton Sinclair's *Wet Parade*. There are many others of his books at the Ashram. I got only two here, all the rest are there. As for Mahadev's view of your capacity for losing books, you will know it from what follows. You should not readily accept their "no" to your demand for a spinning-wheel. Carry on a courteous fight for it. I will look into the book on health when it arrives. Mahadev certainly did not receive the letter written to him from Delhi. Lakshmi writes to me regularly and so do I to her.

Mahadev may or may not write to Durga a letter which will be a letter according to you. But he asks me to add this here: His charge against you about losing books referred to the loss of as many as 80 books at the jail gate in 1930. It was the goodness of the stranger that he delivered them to us, but his goodness does not mitigate your carelessness. If Mahadev had your company as he had twice formerly, he would have been much happier. Sometimes when cooking he remembers you and recalls the Lucknow days when you did joint cooking. When carding he remembers you daily (since you helped him in carding everyday). And he unfailingly remembers you whenever he gets a good book to read (though he does not get much time to read, despite his having a whole heap of books with him, for spinning and carding take up four or five hours in the morning, then he spends two hours with me, and writing the diary in detail also takes up some time). He remembers you when recalling memories of our stay in England, when singing *bhajans* at the time of prayer, when taking soda-water in the evening, etc., etc. If you read the *Gitarahasya*[1] in Hindi why didn't you read it in the Marathi original? If you can read the whole of Shibli's volume you can make from it a beautiful book in Gujarati describing incidents in the Prophet's life. Kaka, Narahari, Mani and Prabhudas, all four of them underwent considerable suffering at Belgaum, but the problems have been nearly solved now. I am in correspondence with all, (though not as regularly as I am with you). But of course how long will the thing last! Among newspapers, besides *The Times* [*of India*] we get *The Leader*, *The* [*Bombay*] *Chronicle*, *The Hindu*, and *The Tribune*. Mahadev does not get much time to read

[1] Commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* by B. G. Tilak

them. You know his indifference in the matter, but he pastes a good many cuttings. (It is Sardar who reads the papers to us both.) The load of correspondence is getting heavier day by day. In addition to the Ashram post, we get quite a good number of letters from other places (that is, from England and America). The entertaining letter[1] which Romain Rolland wrote to an American friend about our stay with him has been published in India. You will find quite a good deal of useful material from Mahadev's Diary and his album of cuttings—he keeps copies of important correspondence too. Jamnalalji, Pyarelal, Vinoba, and Manilal Kothari, all of them are happy in the Dhulia jail. Mathuradas and Kishorelal are at Nasik, Ramdas, Chhaganlal, Surendra and others are here, Kanti and other youngsters are at Visapur, and most of the Ashram women excepting Ba are here—I am in fairly regular correspondence with all these. Have you heard that Sardar's son, Dahyabhai, lost his wife? For poor Yashoda, it was a real deliverance, since her life was a living death to her.[2]

The envelope containing this letter was made by Vallabhbhai. We thus try to save every pie. Blessings from us all should always be understood.

BAPU

SJT. DEVDAS GANDHI
'A' CLASS PRISONER
DISTRICT JAIL
GORAKHPUR, U.P.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2016

518. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

May 11, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I got a letter from you after a long time. Do not give up the work which you have begun. Look upon it as part of your education.

Why should we not treat everybody as a friend? Exclusive friendships may even result in bitterness. But our life will be full of joy if we regard everybody as a friend.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, Appendix II.
[2] What follows is in Gandhiji's hand.

If you wish to spare the time required for the preparation of dramatics, etc., from the hours of manual work, you should consider whether the others can do without your help. We should do what farmers' and shepherds' children do. Why not spare the time for dramatics from the study hours? Think over this and let me know.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

519. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

May 11, 1932

CHI. MANU,

Your handwriting was good this time. Your weight should improve. I am glad that you have started spinning. How many rounds do you spin [per hour]?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7430. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

520. LETTER TO PADMA

May 11, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I got your letter. Rambhau and Dhiru told me in their letters the very same thing that you did. When it becomes impossible to use my hand now, I rotate the wheel with my foot. Since the slivers are very bad, my speed does not exceed 100 rounds. When I start using better slivers, it will go at any rate to 160.

As regards your digestion, take the measures I have described in my letter to Sarojini. In addition to them, you should drink in the morning a glass of warm water with ten grains of soda mixed in it.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6133. Also C.W. 3485. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

521. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

May 11/12, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I asked you about your weight and diet[1] because I felt some doubt concerning your health. What was your highest weight in the past? Don't they cook tomatoes or *bhaji* any time? They had decided to plant lettuce, what happened to that? You yourself can plant lettuce or fenugreek in a small bed. They will sprout in but a few days. You must include some fresh green leaves in your diet. Since one can eat them uncooked only in small quantities, growing them is no difficult matter. I don't know why tomatoes cannot be grown all the year round. Ask someone.

I met Dhurandhar immediately [after he was brought here] and visit him from time to time, for I had come to know him closely during the March. Moreover, since I take interest in your life I take in his, too, for your sake. This is an instance not of special love for an individual, but of non-violence. If we bear love for one person so that we feel aversion to others or cannot love them, then that would be an instance of special love. I believe that I bear no such love for any person. I do all that I do for you because I think you require such attention from me, because you expect it and because I believe it is in my interest to do so for I expect much from you. If you see practical shrewdness behind this attitude, I would not quarrel with you. Personally I think this is the mark of a non-violent nature.

I hope you have not forgotten about the Urdu books.

If all the people have decided to leave the Ashram at the same time, I do not approve of that. But now the Ashram has been in existence for so long that I would not argue about any matter nor complain against anything connected with it. Realizing that something is wrong somewhere, I try to get things right whenever such an occasion arises, and dissuade people from leaving it if I can do so without much trouble. If the Ashram is likely to be deserted completely and if you can stay behind cheerfully, do so, and leave when other workers return. However,

[1] *Vide* p. 384.

it is for Narandas and you to decide what is the right course for you to adopt. How can I judge from here?

May 12, 1932

I send with this an article by Montessori in the weekly *Hindu*. Mahadev liked it and so I asked him to take out the cutting. Read it. See if you find anything in it worth accepting. Otherwise throw it away.

Sushila will be permitted to see me. If, therefore, you wish to bring her along when you come, you may do so.

I did not intentionally leave any of your questions unanswered. I still cannot recollect which question I left unanswered. If you ask it again, I will reply to it.

The problem about the type of education imparted in the Ashram is an old one. I don't think it is proper to make any comparison with a boarding school. The whole burden is borne by Narandas, and he may, therefore, act as he thinks best. You can help him in arriving at a decision. Personally, I would apply one rule, namely, that the proposal should appeal to the children. Everything which they do unwillingly will fail in its aim and will have helped in perpetuating the tradition of compulsion. We can stop observing holidays if and only if the children welcome the idea.

I will not pass judgment about anything which you did in the Ashram school. If I were there, I would certainly interfere from time to time, but I will say nothing from here. As you follow the practice of self-examination, you will correct yourself whenever you go wrong.

I don't know if I had tried to teach you knowledge of the Brahman, but in any case you betrayed your ignorance by claiming that you had it. The arguments which you went on to advance serve only to prove your ignorance. An intellectual understanding of the concept of the Brahman does not amount to a knowledge of It. Knowledge of the Brahman awakens in the heart. And it is not true that one who has attained to that state renounces all external activity. Outwardly, the spiritually awakened man and the ignorant may look alike, but the motives which inspire their activities are as poles asunder. Ramanama is not incompatible with knowledge of the Brahman. They may mean the same thing. Any person claiming knowledge of the Brahman, who feels polluted by Ramanama has fallen into the well of ignorance and is in a desperate condition. He who merely repeats Ramanama with his lips engages in a fruitless exercise and wastes his time. Knowledge of the Brahman and being happy in my

presence are certainly not incompatible with each other; if, however, my absence affects your devotion to duty, you have not attained knowledge of the Brahman but are in a state of ignorance. Anyone who claims to have such knowledge will in all probability be devoid of it. It is a knowledge which does not speak about itself—its presence is revealed by its own light. The sun does not have to testify to the fact of its light. We can see that it shines. We can say the same thing about knowledge of the Brahman.

When I had faith in British rule, I used to believe that it was for the ultimate good of the country, that it was inspired by noble motives. But I cannot discuss this question further.

I do not like the literature on sex that is being published in America.

BAPU

[PS.]

I do intend to write about it. When children ask questions, we should give them straight answers. I don't know about the cinema, but stage performances have a place. For realizing God, the practice of non-attachment seems to me the best method. It includes everything.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10285. Also C.W. 6733. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

522. *LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE*

May 12, 1932

DEAR COLONEL DOYLE,

I am deeply grateful to you for the prompt reply you have sent in respect of my inquiry contained in my letter[1] of the 4th instant. The addition of three ounces of ghee to Kaka Kalelkar's diet certainly meets, if I may dare to say so, the physical needs of his constitution. The assurances contained in your letter do relieve me of considerable anxiety on the score of these friends of mine.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] *Vide* p. 396.

523. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI[1]

May 12, 1932

I got your letter. It was a beautiful one. My statement that Jainism puts emphasis on pure *nyaya*[2] has been slightly misunderstood by you. Pure *nyaya* may mean right policy or just decision, and ordinarily that is the sense in which we use the word. But I did not use it in that sense. I wanted to say that Jainism emphasizes logic, but that logic sometimes leads to wrong conclusions the consequences of which are fearful. This is not the fault of logic, but we do not always possess all the data necessary for arriving at a correct conclusion. Nor is every word understood by the hearer or the reader in the same sense in which it was used by the speaker or the writer. Hence the heart, that is *bhakti*, faith and first-hand experience, is given a higher place than logic. Logic is a purely intellectual process. We should not care in the least if logic, that is intellect, cannot understand what is self-evident to the heart. On the contrary, sometimes our intellect is convinced of certain ideas which the heart does not accept. We should, then, reject them. You will be able to think of any number of illustrations which will explain my point. In the sense in which I have used the word *nyaya* above, it can never be an end in itself. Both *nyaya* and the yoga of desireless work are means. The former belongs to the sphere of the intellect, the latter is a matter of the heart. We cannot cultivate desirelessness with the help of the intellect.

Now I will deal with the issue which you have raised. Compassion and ahimsa are not two different things. Compassion is not opposed to ahimsa. Anything which is so opposed is not true compassion. We can describe compassion as the concrete expression of ahimsa. It is a contradiction in terms to describe any man as free from attachment and without compassion. A person who is free from attachment should have a compassionate heart

[1] "Who wrote that according to the Jains even compassion is included in attachment (*raga*), albeit a desirable one, and therefore Bapu's action in putting an ailing calf out of pain was not worthy of *vitaraga* (one who is free from attachment)" (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai,* Vol. I, pp. 108-9).

[2] *Vide* pp. 327-8.

as large as the ocean. And when such compassion embraces millions, to say that, though *sattvik*, it is not free from attachment is to betray ignorance of the meaning of the word or else to give it a new meaning. Generally, we use the word in the sense in which Tulsidas has used it. His meaning is clear in the following *doha*[1]: दया धर्म का मूल है पाप/देह मूल अभिमान ।[2] Here, compassion is used as a synonym for ahimsa. Perfect ahimsa is possible only in the *atman* in its disembodied state. But when the *atman* takes on a body, ahimsa manifests itself in one as the feeling of compassion. Considered from this point of view, my mercy-killing of the calf[3] was an expression of the purest ahimsa. To endure suffering in one's own person is the very nature of the *atman*, but it is contrary to its nature to make or let others suffer. If the mercy-killing of the calf had been prompted by a desire to relieve my own pain [at its suffering], the act was not ahimsa, but to end the calf's pain was ahimsa. Indeed, ahimsa implies inability to endure other creatures suffering pain. From such inability arise compassion, heroism and all other virtues associated with ahimsa. It is perverse logic to argue that we should be able to look on while others suffer. Again, it is not always true that death is more painful for human beings than anything they may suffer in life. I think that it is we ourselves that have made death the terror it is. The so-called savages do not have the same fear of death. The martial races also have very little of it. And in the West a school of thought is spreading whose followers would prefer to end their lives rather than go on living in extreme pain. I think that the assumption of excessive fear of death proceeds from ignorance or dry theorizing. Because of that assumption, we, and especially the Jains, have perverted the meaning of ahimsa, with the result that true ahimsa has practically disappeared. A woman who jumps into a well in anger may clutch at a rope offered to her, but one who has jumped into it deliberately under the force of some belief, whatever it be, will disdain to avail herself of a rope even if offered to her. The practice of *harakiri* among the Japanese is a well-known example of this. Whether that practice is the result of right knowledge or ignorance is beside the point. Here I am only pointing out that there are countless instances in which men prefer death to life. In the West they kill animals whose con-

[1] Couplet

[2] "Compassion is the source of dharma and pride is the source of sin (or, the ego is the cause of the body)."

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXXVII.

dition is hopeless and who suffer extreme pain, and behind this practice lies the belief that they do not experience much fear of death, and that they will prefer death to suffering pain beyond a certain limit. This idea may not be true, and it is, therefore, our duty to behave towards animals as if life was as dear to them as it is to human beings.

If you accept so much, it is not very necessary to consider the matter from a social point of view or from the point of view of our duty towards society. Where the people have regard for ahimsa, there is little risk of the example of my killing the calf being misused. Where people have no such regard, in any case animals are killed. Thus, my action is not likely to increase violence to animals. When killing the calf, it was not necessary for me to know all the possible consequences of my action. If it was certain that the calf would never die in any other manner, I should of course have paused before killing it. In other words, if it were the case that nobody but I could have ended the calf's life, it would have been necessary for me to think of all the possible consequences of my action. But the fact is that all creatures, calves as much as we, live with the possibility of death always hanging over us. Therefore, the utmost that could have happened was that the calf would have lived for a few days or months or a year more. These considerations are not irrelevant to the case, since my motive was disinterested and my only aim was to end the pain of the calf. We may, therefore, say that even if there was any error in my reasoning, no harmful consequence to the calf followed which would never have followed but for my action.[1] Ask me again and again till you have understood the point. The subject is an important one and the explanation deserves to be carefully grasped. It is easy to grasp, and once it is grasped you will be able to deduce many other consequences from it.

It is undoubtedly true that my approach to the problem attacks certain generally accepted beliefs. But I do believe that we, that is Hindus, have become so full of cowardice and inertia that the true essence of ahimsa is forgotten and the thing has come to be identified with superficial concern for the lives of lower creatures. In its essence, ahimsa is a powerful emotion of the heart which finds expression in numerous forms of service. If it manifests itself in its perfection even in one human being,

[1] The rest of the paragraph is from the C.W. copy.

its light would be far more powerful than that of the sun. But where do we find such ahimsa today?[1]

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 150-3. Also C.W. 9112. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

524. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 13, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

In the hope that you would get this on or before Monday, I write in reply to your unexpected letter received today.

It is well if you do without the fountain pen. But what we must aim at is the correct attitude. This brings about lasting and drastic changes. A detailed local treatment must go hand in hand with a penetrating search after the root cause, the desire to possess. It is possible to conceive a person not being poor in spirit though he may have nothing, because he is jealous of those who possess. He has nothing, but feels the deprivation. Another may have by him a golden footstool which he is seen using in order to save his feet from treading on hot ashes, but which he converts into cash for the poor the very next moment and feels the delight of dispossession. This is not to criticize what you have done but to enforce it, if it is at all necessary or possible.

You will come as soon as you can, bringing with you anyone who may wish to come and who is permitted to come. Pyare Ali and Noorbanu can come. Not yet Damodardas whose name is still under consideration. You should go to Pyare Ali's place and there see Amina's children and Tilak. Of course, Tilak

[1] Mahadev Desai explains: "While the above was being dictated, we had a discussion about the two readings in Tulsidas's verse: Bapu said, "I have heard both of them, but I prefer to read *deha* (body)." I remarked that the Vedantic idea that pride is the root of the body did not fit in well here. Perhaps the poet wanted to say that mercy is the root of religion and pride is the root of sin. Bapu said, "If we read *deha*, he means that the body being the root of pride is an obstacle in the way of mercy. But to spend ourselves to the uttermost in service is purest mercy. This mercy should be cherished as long as we live." I objected that that was so but it was not what the poet meant to say. Again Bapu's interpretation was too subtle for the common man, while he could easily understand that pride is the root of sin. In any case, the latter half of the verse had nothing to do with the subject-matter of the letter." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 111)

can come if he wants to. There is immediately the question of poverty. But I would not bring it up in his case if he has a desire he cannot restrain.

Your left-hand writing is certainly steadier than mine. You will, in a short time, write as well with the left as you do with the right hand.

I am delighted Sofia is with you. I have met her. It is just like her to join you in prayer so heartily. Give her my love. I would almost wish for her sake that she had you longer than you would be. Let her write to me if ever she has a month when she has nobody else in particular to write to. That could not be I am sure. But who can say?

Magan wheel has caused me trouble, but I am gaining mastery over it. Ground-nuts are gone. Vallabhbhai and Mahadev frightened me and I have allowed myself to be frightened. My weight has gone up to 105½ again.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6221. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9687

525. *WONDERFUL SELF-SACRIFICE*[1]

May 15, 1932

Sometimes a lesson in even an ordinary school reader teaches us a great moral. Recently I have been reading an Urdu reader. Some of the lessons in it are very good. One of them produced a profound effect on me. Thinking that it may have such effect on others too, I give here a summary.

A few years after the death of the Prophet, there was a great battle between the Arabs and the Romans. On both sides large numbers of warriors were killed and a great many wounded. Every evening the fighting would stop. One evening after the fighting had ended an Arab warrior went round the battlefield to find his cousin. If he found the cousin dead, he would bury the body, and if he found him alive he would treat his wounds. Thinking that the cousin might be thirsting for water, this Arab carried a jug full of water.

As, with lamp in hand, he made his way through the bodies of warriors lying wounded and crying in pain, he found his

[1] Presumaply, this was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 13/15-5-1932; *vide* the following item.

cousin and indeed he was thirsting for water. His wounds were bleeding profusely. There was little hope of his remaining alive. The Arab held out the jug of water before him. Just then they heard a wounded warrior crying pitifully for water. The cousin felt compassion for that man and asked the Arab to go first to him and give him water. The latter immediately went in the direction from which they had heard the cry.

This wounded man crying for water was a big chieftain. As he was about to take the jug of water from the Arab, they heard somebody else crying for water. This chieftain, like the Arab's cousin, was a man of compassion. With great difficulty, he uttered a few words and made gestures to the Arab and explained to him that he should first go to that other person and give him water. Feeling miserable, the Arab ran to the place from which the cries had come. But the moment he reached there, the wounded warrior breathed his last and closed his eyes. The water had arrived too late. The Arab quickly returned to where the wounded chieftain was lying. He found that the chieftain, too, was dead. With a heavy heart and praying to God, the Arab went back to where his cousin lay, and found that his pulse, too, had stopped and he had died.

Thus, none of the three got water. But the first two won immortal fame. The pages of history abound in such instances of pure self-sacrifice, and, if they are narrated by a master of the pen, we even shed a few tears over them. But I have narrated this wonderful story here with the hope that it may inspire in us the spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by those two brave warriors and that, when such occasions arise, we will give water first to others before drinking it ourselves, will save others' lives before saving our own and if, in trying to do so, we meet death, we will meet it with a smile on our face.

I think even more difficult than the sacrifice of water is that of air. Without it we cannot live even for a minute. That is why the whole world seems to have been filled with air. However, it does sometimes happen that men are locked up in a small room as in a cupboard. There is only one small hole letting in air, and only those who get this air are likely to survive and the others would die. We should pray to God that if ever we found ourselves in such a condition we would voluntarily give up our place near the hole.

Next to air comes water. We occasionally hear of men fighting for a glass of water. We should hope that if we find ourselves in such circumstances, we will have the spirit of self-

sacrifice displayed by those brave Arabs. But very few people are tested in this manner. There are less severe tests which we face almost every day. Let all of us ask ourselves: Whenever we are confronted by such tests, do we always put our co-workers and neighbours before ourselves? If the answer is in the negative, then it means that we have failed in the test and that we have not learnt even the first lesson in non-violence.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

526. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

[*May 13/15, 1932*][1]

CHI. NARANDAS,

I received two packets from you this time. I follow your argument that yarn of 16 counts will be cheaper than that of 20 counts. But I think we shall find that on the balance yarn of 20 counts is cheaper, for in spinning such yarn we shall have to remain vigilant all the time. The spindle, etc., will have to be kept in good condition. By "cheap" I do not mean here merely economical. I give to the word a spiritual sense. If, therefore, you see no other difficulty, insist on everybody spinning yarn of 20 counts and do it yourself, and see that the other conditions are also observed. If you find that this results in decrease in production for the time being, never mind. Probably you remember one thing which I suggested to you once or twice. We should reckon the value of all types of work at the same rate. In other words, if a person works for one hour, whether he spins or cards or weaves or does carpentry work or writes accounts or works on the farm, the value of his work should be the same. For the purpose of our record, I had suggested that the value should be one anna per hour of work. If all inmates of the Ashram above the age of ten, other than those who may be bed-ridden, have been working daily for an average of eight hours, I would say that the Ashram was self-supporting. This may seem just now to entail loss from the economic point of view, but ultimately the account will balance itself even from that point of view. Of course, in proceeding on this basis we assume that all inmates have been honest. Everybody must have used the time honestly. To make sure of this, we should have considered,

[1] From *Bapuna Patro-9: Shri Narandas Gandhine*, Vol. I, p. 368

when making the entry, whether the person had done as much work per hour as everybody doing that work was expected to do, and whether he had done it with proper care. I did not suggest that this record should take the place of the usual account that is kept. It does not require too many entries. The daily figure will be entered against everybody's name; it may be one in some cases and two in others, and the figures will indicate the number of hours for which the person had worked. The figures will be entered only against those who pass the test in our eyes. I would call this a spiritual account. If we work in this manner, whatever the yield of our farm and our dairy I would describe those activities as self-supporting. Moreover, this plan assumes that the labourers will be as good as inmates of the Ashram and that we shall be satisfied with the vegetables, fruit and milk which we produce in the Ashram. These ideas have not sprung up in my mind recently. I have been discussing them ever since the establishment of the Ashram. I may not have discussed them at length with you, but I used to discuss them frequently with Maganlal. But till now they have remained as mere wishes. I am simply pouring out before you the stream of thoughts which started with reflections on the spinning *yajna* during the National Week. I do not wish that you should start implementing these suggestions right now. You are a steady man, and, therefore, I do not hesitate to put before you whatever ideas come to me. I don't wish to confuse your mind in any way or start you worrying needlessly. There are persons who become impatient as soon as a new suggestion is put before them, immediately start implementing it and, failing in their attempt, get confused. In the result they will have given up the old practice but discovered nothing to take its place. I believe you do not have this weakness in your nature and that is why I throw out to you every new fancy which occurs to me. When you are fed up with this, please drop a hint and I shall calm down. From here I can give you no active help in your work, but within my limits I can help you with suggestions. But this help also I can give only if you receive the suggestions patiently, put each in the proper cabinet in your brain and weigh its practicability before acting on it. If, however, they become a burden on your brain, my sending them will serve no useful purpose.

Let me return for a while to the question of 20 counts. It is not quite correct that cloth woven from yarn of 16 counts lasts longer than cloth woven from yarn of 20 counts. If the cotton from which the yarn of 20 counts was woven was of suffi-

ciently good quality and was properly carded, and if the yarn spun from it was strong enough and the weaving was sufficiently close, the cloth would certainly last longer than the cloth of 16 counts which we have with us now. The fact that the latter lasts longer only means this: Both the varieties of yarn which we spin, 16 counts and 20 counts, are weak. But the yarn of 16 counts is likely to be less weak comparatively, and such yarn can be spun even from cotton of inferior quality without its quality being affected. Hence the cloth woven from it may appear stronger than the cloth woven from the yarn of 20 counts. If we cling to this belief, we shall be responsible for spreading the notion that cloth woven from yarn of 16 counts is stronger than cloth from yarn of 20 counts, and, if my argument about yarn of 20 counts is correct, we shall also be responsible for encouraging work of bad quality. Up to a limit, the finer the count of the yarn which we are able to spin the better shall we be able to serve the poor, because that will raise the prestige of khadi.

I think we shall be able to demonstrate that it is not difficult to spin fine yarn which can be used for weaving cloth. Just now I give all my attention to learning to spin on the Magan spinning-wheel. But Mahadev has been experimenting with the slivers sent by Chhakkaddas. He has made some changes in the spindle-bearer, and these changes by themselves have enabled him to spin without any difficulty yarn of 36 counts from the slivers which he has been using all along. Previously he could spin yarn of 20 counts, then of 25 counts and now he can spin yarn of 36 counts. In the letter which I wrote to Lakshmidas yesterday I have explained how this improvement took place. Get that letter from him and read it. It is true, however, that Mahadev's speed has decreased a little. When he was spinning yarn of 25 counts, his speed was 300 rounds per hour; it was 240 when the yarn was of 32 counts, and now for yarn of 36 counts it is 210 rounds per hour. This decrease does not alarm me in the least. When the count of the yarn becomes fixed, I am sure his speed will increase a little. My point is that by gradually learning to spin yarn of finer count, we are helping the cause of khadi. It seems you celebrated Maganlal's anniversary in a most befitting manner.

Panditji, Lakshmibehn, Yashvant Prasad and Mathuri came and saw me. Manibehn was the oldest among the party, and hence I gave the letter to Harilal to her. While giving it I asked her and was told that all of them would return to the Ashram

on the same day. I sent the letter with her, thinking that it would reach you earlier than by post. I feel helpless. I got one more letter from Harilal. In both letters I see pure insolence and total lack of shame. I don't see in Bali the faults for which he blames her. She has been like a mother to Manu, and, therefore, it would be a cruelty on Manu to remove her from her charge. However, I cannot have in prison the information which you may get there. After knowing my views, therefore, do what seems best to you whenever you have to decide what to do.

There is no cause for worry about my hand. It pains when I work, but not at other times. If I feel that milk will help to cure the pain, I will certainly start taking it. The pain was there even when I used to take milk.

I see that Ratilal is a heavy responsibility on you. I have had two letters from Champa. She seems to have felt hurt for some reason. See what you can do to pacify her. She says that her younger brother wants to stay in the Ashram. If you think he can stay in the Ashram, take him in. Write to Harihar Sharma and ask him if he will take away Ratilal. I am afraid that even if he goes to Rangoon he will not stay there without Champa. And the latter does not wish to go there. I believe that she has good reasons for not wishing to go there.

Grant the permission desired by Ranganath Kulkarni to make a Marathi translation. None of the papers sent by Jethalal Govindji were reports about Anantpur. But I did get one letter from him. The prison authorities tell me that the reports must have been received, but that they seem to have been misplaced. Please, therefore, obtain their copies from him.

There is probably much exaggeration in the complaint you have received regarding the women. I will, howerver, inquire about the matter.

I sent to you the five names of intending visitors which were approved. The other names which have been approved are as under:

Indu Nehru, Jehangir Vakil (of Poona, Indu's tutor) and his wife, Hemprabha Devi, Raihana, Hiravanti Mansukh lal, Chhaganlal, Rama (Ranchhodbhai's) Prabhashankar (Champa's father), Behram Khambhatta and his wife, Manjukesha, Sushila (Pyarelal's sister), Sushila (Premabehn's friend), Dinkar Mehta, Puratan Buch. You need not write to them. If Puratan comes to the Ashram any time, you can tell him that he may come whenever he wishes. I have given the list only for your information. If you know of any other persons who wish

to visit and if they come within the conditions laid down by the Government, please send their names to me.

There is a letter from Mahavir. He writes in it that all of them are keeping good health and that, therefore, they should be permitted to stay on for a few months more. I think that they may be permitted to stay on. It would be advisable to fix the upper limit of their expenditure. I should like them to take up some work in Darjeeling. If you can think of any, please suggest it. I think you did write to me and tell me what their monthly expenditure was, but I have forgotten the figure. I think it would be good if they marry Maitri to someone in Darjeeling. She has certainly reached marriageable age. They wished to get her married to Khadgabahadur. But I don't think he will agree. I have written directly to Maitri about this. Read that letter. If in the end they decide to stay permanently in Darjeeling and Mahavir starts earning, that would certainly be good. If you have thought about any suggestions in this regard or if any suggestion occurs to you in future, please let me know.

Ramdas writes and tells me that he has deposited some of his money in a certain bank and he wants the amount to remain where it is. I heard that Gopaldas[1], the Vidyapith graduate, has received serious injuries. Inquire about him and let me know the facts. If he is able to write, ask him to do so. Ask Chandrashankar to send me by registered post a copy of Maganbhai's *Mimansa*[2]. He should also write how he keeps.

Did Ba get my letter? I have had no letter from her at all. Did you read what Jamnadas said about Harilal? I am afraid the latter has misled you. Many persons write to me and tell me that he has abandoned all restraints. Haridas Gandhi's[3] health is fairly good. He is being treated properly. His illness, however, is mental. Does his father visit him? Where is Kamala?

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8226. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Gopaldas Jivabhai Patel, who was seriously injured in a lathi-charge at a Congress meeting in Delhi

[2] Maganbhai Desai's thesis *Satyagrahni Mimansa*, for which he was awarded the degree of *Samajvidya Parangat* by the Vidyapith

[3] He was one of the prisoners transferred from Sabarmati to Yeravda.

527. *LETTER TO MANSHANKAR J. TRIVEDI*

May 15, 1932

CHI. MANU,

I got your letter. According to me, the most important benefit of your going there[1] will be improvement in your health and the good and bad experiences which you will get there. It will certainly be very good if you attain great proficiency in your medical studies, but see that you do not harm your health or let go opportunities for other experiences for the sake of your studies. Since you will have to study German, learn it sufficiently well to be able to read and understand German literature without difficulty. And you should be careful to create a good impression on the people about you, that is, about India. I have just received a letter from Walsh[2] in which he writes about you. Both he and Zimmermann impressed me as good men.

Do you meet any Indians there?

All three of us are well. Sardar and Mahadev send their blessings to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1005

528. *LETTER TO MAHAVIR GIRI*

May 15, 1932

CHI. MAHAVIR,

I got your letter. I cannot understand why you did not get mine. In future I will send through the Ashram my letters to you. All of you also should send your letters to me through the same channel. I hope the money has been sent to you. Please drop the idea of going to Kalimpong. If all of you keep good health, you may remain where you are. And everyone in the family should take up some work. What is everybody's programme during the day? Do all of you keep a correct diary?

[1] To Germany
[2] Carlyle Walsh

How is it that I have had no letter from Maitri? Has Krishnamaiyadevi recovered now? With whom do you stay?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6235

529. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

May 15, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

You should write in your diary anything which occurs to you. You can write even your most secret thoughts. Nothing concerning ourselves need be kept secret from other people, and you should not, therefore, worry who will read your diary. For that reason, however, you cannot record others' short-comings or what anybody may have told you in confidence. Only the secretary of the Ashram or a person authorized by him has the right to read anybody's diary. But, on our part, we should not wish our diary to be kept secret from any person.

You should not in any circumstances stop spinning on the *takli* and be out of practice, no matter even if you can give to it only half an hour every day. Have you become methodical now?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7498. Also C.W. 4975. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

530. LETTER TO PADMA

May 15, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I advised you to come away because you asked for my opinion. If, however, you yourself wish to stay there, why need I ask you to come away? When Sitala Sahai comes there, ask him to write to me.

I have kept up spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel. Your suggestion was not found very useful. It did not solve my difficulties. If the wheel has not stopped in the desired position, I have often to use the hand to put it in that position. But I can

use only one hand. The left hand is useless because of the pain in the elbow.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6141. Also C.W. 3493. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

531. LETTER TO SUSHILABEHN GANDHI

May 15, 1932

CHI. SUSHILA,

You are a very clever woman. I do not understand how you can say that you have been waiting for a letter from me, having written to everybody earlier to say that you were starting today. If now you do not get a letter, you may complain. I am glad that you have decided to stay there for the sake of Sita. I also did think sometimes whether it would be good for you and her to come over. Let me know how you are helping there and also write to me in detail about your daily programme of work. I am sure you have good company now. Ask Pragji to write to me in detail. How is Parvati? Will all of you stay together or separately?

All three of us are happy.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

The envelope in which this letter is being sent was made by Sardar. It was made from the paper in which the small parcels which we receive are wrapped. People like you living in a civilized country may not look with favour upon such gifts from a poor land. But what can we do? Seeing your palaces, should we destroy our cottages?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4788

532. *LETTER TO BHAU PANSE*

May 15, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

I have your letter and also Vinoba's discourse on the first chapter [of the *Gita*]. Follow it up by the second.

It will be good if all learn the new method of using *takli*. Which of you have learnt it? I hope you are keeping well.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6727. Also C.W. 4470. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

533. *LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

May 15, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I got your letter yesterday. I had sent a prompt reply to your letter written from Gwalior. I addressed it to Gwalior which might be the reason of its non-receipt by you. Some of my letters are certainly missing. Malaviyaji's enthusiasm as well as his optimism is worthy of emulation. We are all doing well. My diet so far continues to be the same and I am maintaining approximately the same weight. I hope Rameshwardas is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 7898. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

534. *LETTER TO MAITHILISHARAN GUPTA*[1]

May 15, 1932

BHAI MAITHILISHARANJI,

I got your letter and the dictionary too. I received another copy of *Saket* with your annotations. The notes will be of great help to me. I will not bother you to send *Hindi Shabdasagar*. The Kalyan office might possibly send me one. Anyhow, I shall manage well enough with your notes and the dictionary. This correspondence about *Saket* cannot be made public for the present. The condition that no letters of mine will be published during my incarceration is implied in the permission for writing letters granted to me. And there is no harm in keeping this correspondence unpublished for some time. The inherent strength of *Saket* will by itself push it ahead. Mahadev had an experience of your affection, I was extremely delighted to hear the whole account from him.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From Hindi: C.W. 9457. Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi

535. *LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA*

May 15, 1932

CHI. BRIJKISAN,

I have your letter. I had sent a lengthy reply to your earlier letter in which I answered all your queries. But it appears that it did not reach you as you have made no mention of it. We all are doing well. Convey our *salaam*, *vandemataram* and respectful greetings to the friends there. I hope you are maintaining your health. Rest on hearing from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2392

[1] The letter was in reply to the addressee's (C.W. 9458) suggesting publication of his correspondence with Gandhiji for the benefit of the readers of *Saket*.

536. LETTER TO BABALBHAI MEHTA

May 16, 1932

CHI. BABALBHAI,

I hope you can now spin yarn of 20 counts. The daily reading of the *Gita* you find uninteresting because probably you do not reflect over what you read. If you look upon the *Gita* as our mother who guides us daily in our life, you will not find its reading uninteresting. After the reading every day, you should reflect for a minute over what you have read. You will daily learn something new. Only a perfect man will have no more to learn from it. But the ordinary man who commits some error or other every day will not weary of reading the *Gita* if he looks upon it as the mother who will save him from his faults.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9451

537. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

May 16, 1932

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I have heard from you after a long time. I of course had learnt the fact of Harilal's beastly behaviour, but wanted to know the details from you as I did not depend in any way upon what Anandilal had written to me. What are your grounds for saying that I deliberately remain silent on the subject of Harilal's vices? I have never concealed my disapproval. I express it whenever anybody gives him something. What more do you desire or suggest that I should do? Of course I wrote to him and told him that I still cherished the hope that he would repent.[1] That has happened in the case of many. As long as a person is alive, we must continue to hope that he will reform.

Let me have more information about the school. You should not lose self-confidence and give up the work you have undertaken. According to me, it is only there that your health will im-

[1] *Vide* pp. 374-5.

prove. How do you find the atmosphere there? Is the State being ruled well? Are the people happy?

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9444

538. A LETTER

May 16, 1932

Even if your mind wanders when praying, you should keep up the practice. You should retire to a secluded spot, sit in the correct posture and try to keep out all thoughts. Even if they continue to come, you should nevertheless complete the prayer. Gradually the mind will come under control. The *Gita* also says that the mind is restless, but it tells us that with patient effort we can bring it under control. "We shall never willingly accept defeat, though we lose our life in the struggle."

From Gujarati: C.W. 9114. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

539. LETTER TO KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI

May 16, 1932

RESPECTED BROTHER,

You seem to have demonstrated a miracle. From the letters which I got, I had given up hope altogether. But the letters which I get now have raised in me the hope that we shall meet in the present life.

If you can, kindly write a letter to me, otherwise dictate one.

Mahadev is with us.

Respects to you both.

MOHANDAS

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

540. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

May 16, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

If your health does improve there, what more can we desire?

Kusum was guilty of a serious lapse in not asking for permission. Did you draw her attention to her error? Sometimes the girls don't mean anything and forget common courtesy only through their innocence. I admit this short-coming in our education.

If the grown-up women treat all the children as their own, the latter would develop very well.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 853. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

541. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

May 16, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

The letter is altogether incomplete. I will think out questions when I have some time. You should reply to them and after that I will do what I can. I will then call for the papers here. There is no hurry just now. My promise to write means that I will write but only when I get time.

Are you referring to the letters which I dictated to you? If that is so, when some day a collection of letters dictated to various persons is published, those dictated to you will also be included in it. Is there any special reason for publishing the latter separately?

If you have not settled down by June and pay a visit in the first week, you will be able to see Mahadev too. Did you visit Pyarelal? If Sushila wants to visit me, she will be able to do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1837

542. LETTER TO FULCHAND B. SHAH

May 16, 1932

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

All of us were glad to receive your letter. We need not worry over such incidents.[1] After all we are prisoners, and should be content with whatever facilities we are allowed. Time was when prisoners were not permitted either to read or write, were not even given sufficient food to eat, were kept in fetters all the twenty-four hours and made to sleep on straw. We should, therefore, think it God's kindness that we get the facilities which we do. When our self-respect is attacked, we may lay down our lives to save it, but we should endure physical suffering.

We were happy to learn that all of you were happy there. After all, happiness and unhappiness are states of one's own mind. The fact that you and Mama obey the rules and persuade others also to obey them and to observe cleanliness does great credit to you both.

I hope that every one of you there makes the best use of his time. You are not likely to get such quiet and leisure again in life. You may read if you get books, and you can always think and reflect. And there is so much work, too, from which you should volunteer to do something or the other. There is one serious mistake which all of us commit, and it is that we waste Government's time or property as if they did not belong to us personally. A little reflection will show that the Government's time and property belong to the people. If we waste them because they are at present controlled by the Government, it is the people's property and time we waste. We should, therefore, make the best use of anything which we have occasion to use. The goods also which we produce by our work in jail increase the nation's wealth. The fact that the present Government is foreign does not affect this argument. But I would be entering the field of politics if I go further than this, and as prisoners we cannot discuss politics. I, therefore, stop here on this subject. Tell me, when you write

[1] This sentence is reproduced from a fragment of the letter in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 156. From the addressee's letter to Gandhiji written from Visapur jail, 13 lines had been censored out by the jail authorities.

next, who else I know are there, or somebody else whose time for exercising his right of writing a letter has come may write to me. Is Diwan Master in that jail? Is Madhavlal of the Ashram also there?

The three of us, it may be said, are really enjoying our time. There are no restrictions on food except those which are self-imposed, nor on the hours of rest and sleep. Carding and spinning are going on fairly well. And we also read. We get a reasonable supply of newspapers too. As for books, friends send them regularly. We pray at regular hours. That is our daily programme.

Our regards to you all.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9445. Courtesy: Chandrakant F. Shah

543. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

May 16, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

If you spin with enough care, you will certainly be able to spin yarn of 20 counts.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9428. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

544. LETTER TO VIMAL KISHORE MEHROTRA

May 16, 1932

CHI. VIMAL,

Your letter this time is good. Keep it up. You can teach everyone Hindi while playing games. Try to spin fine yarn.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7499. Also C.W. 4976. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

545. A LETTER

May 16, 1932

BHAI,

Ask for anything only in the sacrificial spirit.

A guru is one who guides us to righteousness by his own righteous conduct.

True development consists in reducing ourselves to a cipher.

Selfless service is the secret of life. To rise above passions is the highest ideal.

The sages mainly from their own experiences have laid down rules of thought and conduct.

A *rishi* is one who has realized himself. Sannyasa according to *Gita* is the renunciation of actions prompted by desire.

Only one who has his body under control is a man. Beauty because of its quality of inwardness cannot be experienced in the physical sense.

All your questions have been answered.

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 9122. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

546. A LETTER[1]

May 17, 1932

Life without a ruffle would be a very dull business. It is not to be expected. Therefore it is wisdom to put up with all the roughness of life, and that is one of the rich lessons we learn from the *Ramayana*.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 158

[1] The addressee had asked Gandhiji if he had met anybody who was never perturbed.

547. LETTER TO NIRMALA B. MASHRUWALA

May 17, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

I was very glad to get your letter. Write regularly in future and give me news about Kishorelal and Gomati. Do you ever go to see them? Let me know Gomati's diet at present. Who are the others there with her? I know all those who are with Kishorelal. I have written to Manju and advised her not to leave the hospital. She has taken up this responsibility of her own free will. I am of the view that she cannot give it up now without a strong reason for doing so. What is Nathji's view? And what do all of you think? All three of us keep good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2661. Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

548. LETTER TO WOMEN PRISONERS

May 17, 1932

God cannot be seen with our physical eyes. He has no body, and, therefore, we can see Him only with the eyes of faith. When no impure thoughts or feelings disturb us, when we feel no fear and are always serene, that is a sign of God's presence in our heart. In fact, He is always there, but we do not see Him because we do not have faith, and in consequence suffer in many ways. When true faith is awakened in a person, he does not feel the outward sufferings. This is true about Taradevi Bajpai. She should do only as many *pranayamas* and in such manner as cause no physical discomfort. I have no experience of the type of *pranayamas* practised in *Hathayoga*. I cannot therefore guide her in this matter, nor is such *pranayama* necessary. We cannot know God by performing certain physical acts. To know Him we should have living faith and should live according to that faith.

Pranayama and other processes purify the body and give us a measure of peace. They have no other benefit.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 157-8

549. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

May [18][1], *1932*

DEAR COLONEL DOYLE,

Major Bhandari told me today that he was instructed to prohibit Shrimati Mirabai (Slade) from seeing me, should she desire to do so. As it so happened, she having been discharged from Arthur Road Jail yesterday came today to see me. It would have been courteous if she had been previously informed by Government that she would not be allowed to see me. But that is perhaps a small matter. What is of the highest concern for me is that of all the Ashram people Mirabai should be singled out for the prohibition, whereas hitherto she has never been prohibited from seeing me. I have always been under an impression, and have been grateful, that the Government had tacitly recognized not merely the fact of Mirabai being an inmate of the Ashram, but being nearer to me than an Ashram inmate, if such a thing was possible. I may mention that she is under strict instructions not to take an active part in the present political movement and not deliberately to seek imprisonment. Her activity has been confined purely to conducting the constructive khadi movement and reporting to friends in the West the present political happenings. If these be a disqualification, there is hardly a person whom I should be able to see.

If therefore I cannot see Mirabai, I do not know how far I would be justified in availing myself of the permission to receive other visitors. Needless to say that I do not discuss politics with Mirabai or any other visitor, nor have I the slightest desire, even if it was possible for me, to direct the movement from within prison walls. All interviews take place in the presence of the Superintendent. If therefore the Government have any regard for my feelings or Mirabai's, I hope that they will reconsider their decision and permit her to visit me as before.

[1] *Vide* the following item. The source has "19", the date on which the letter was submitted for despatch; *vide* "Diary, 1932", entry under "May 19".

Will you kindly place this letter before the Government and request an early decision?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(2), Pt. I, p. 95

550. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 18/19, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I was distressed suddenly to find that you were not to see me. My first thought was not [to] see anybody at all if I could not see you. But I restrained myself and saw the others. I have now written[1] to the Government asking them to reconsider their decision. If they do not, I imagine I must cease to see others. I have said almost as much in my letter to the Government. It would be another matter if they had any reasonable ground for the prohibition. Meanwhile you should write to me. I hope this unexpected thing has not upset you. More later.

The Bombay happenings[2] are heart-rending. God's will be done.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

[May] 19 [1932]

As I handed this to Superintendent he told me he was sending me your letter. I have it now. I do not need to add anything just now. There is no such thing as a blow in reality.[3] After having entrusted oneself to God where is any room left for blow? Therefore rejoice in suffering.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6222. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9688

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] Hindu-Muslim riots

[3] "Bapu refers to the shock of being refused admission at the gate."—Mirabehn

551. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

May 19, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

It has been decided not to permit Mirabehn to see me. It is a serious question now for me whether I should see other visitors. I have written to the Government and informed it almost in so many words that, unless it reconsiders its decision, I would have to think seriously whether I should see any other visitors. If, therefore, Premabehn, Sushila and you wish to come, you should come soon. I may perhaps be able to see you. If meanwhile I receive a negative reply in regard to Mirabehn, I will most probably send you a wire asking you not to come. You may come even on Tuesday if you wish.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8227. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

552. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

May 19, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

Though you are likely to visit me next week, I think it best that I should reply to your letter. Moreover, an incident which occurred yesterday shows that my receiving visitors should always be treated as uncertain.

Vali has proved her worth very well indeed. I don't think the Ashram can take credit for that. She seems to have joined it with her character already formed.

Why girls brought up in the Ashram seem so weak is a problem which I have not been able to solve. I have my explanations for that, but I think it useless to discuss them unless I can give reasons in support of them. We should try our best to discover the real reasons. It should also be borne in mind that, after leaving the Ashram, these girls do not always improve.

To keep a watch[1] over Narandas means that, when he seems to have taken an excessive burden upon himself you should caution him and also inform me. I have discovered no ambiguity in any of my statements. If they are ambiguous, they are so unintentionally and because of my imperfect command over language. My statements are short, and hence they leave many things unsaid. But in this respect they are like propositions in geometry.

Those girls who wish to learn English may certainly do so if they have paid attention to Hindi and Sanskrit and acquired a good command over Gujarati. Of course, this is subject to facilities for teaching English being available. We ought to have them, no doubt.

You do not seem to have understood my interpretation of passive exercises. What a person does himself cannot be described as passive. Passive exercises are for people who are ill. If I am ill and wish to give exercise to my bowels, and if someone massages the abdomen or raises my legs several times to form a right angle with the rest of the body and lowers them again, and I am not required to raise or lower any limb, then that is passive exercise. I don't think you have understood that this is what the phrase means.

I had two aims in practising silent prayer. One was, of course, to give rest to the mind. But it was also difficult to turn the mind inward except through such prayer. Whenever we lay aside one work and take up another, we should feel that we have ample time on hand. We should not feel impatient or restless. It is thus that we gradually learn detachment.

I think I do command concentration, but not well enough to satisfy me. I try earnestly to cultivate such concentration, but I am not impatient.

If the children take no interest in any of the prayers, a special item can be included for them, as used to be done by Prabhudas. I should be happy if they sit through the prayers with faith and in stillness.

I did not say it by way of praise that the same prayers have continued for sixteen years. It was only a statement of fact. I did not wish to suggest that all have been attending the prayers for so many years. The Ashram has clung to these prayers in the face of all troubles and criticisms and quite a few people have derived peace of mind from them. All that I intended to say was

[1] *Vide* p. 404.

that these prayers ought not to be given up or altered without a strong reason.

Women's prayers will not seem proper in the evening. Moreover, some people devote the evening to reading, etc.

What you write about yourself is correct. You should follow your reason and your heart. I am not impatient. I may tell you what seems proper to me, but cannot force you to accept my suggestion against your reason. All I can do is to act as a friend. I can, at the most, claim my experiences over many years in my favour. If, however, they find no echo in your heart, even thousands of them will have no value for you. I make, of course, one claim for the Ashram. It helps new-comers to grow wings. They may then fly where they will. If they continue in the Ashram of their own free will, they are welcome to stay. Even if they do not stay, the Ashram will have done its duty in one matter. This can be proved to have happened to many persons, especially women. At different times in the past, girls came and joined the Ashram, who had no spirit in them at all. Today they believe themselves independent and are in fact so. Such were Gulbadan, Umiya, Vidyavati, Rukhi, etc. Love for individual persons is not wholly forbidden. Only, such love should not be an obstacle to love for all beings and for God. My love for Ba today flows from my love for God. When I was filled with lust, it was an obstacle to love of God and was, therefore, unworthy.

The loss in your weight need not worry you, if otherwise you are all right. Sushila may come.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10286. Also C.W. 6734. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

553. A LETTER[1]

May 19, 1932

. . .[2] should not be forced to forgo the two special facilities which she enjoys. Till she herself feels a strong desire to forgo them, we cannot ask her to do so. You are both right and not right in citing my example. You are right because so long as I am doing active work people will point to my example and, in consequence, be misled. For a variety of reasons, I cannot demonstrate in my own life standards of conduct which I expect others to follow. I know that this is my deficiency as a leader. At the same time, you are not right in citing my example because my condition is now different from that of my co-workers. One reason for this is my physical weakness, another is my Mahatmaship and the third is my uncommon mode of life. Even if I were in 'C' class, my food would be different from that of the other prisoners, either because of my weakness or my vows. This would be so, more or less, in the case of any prisoner. That other prisoners may not get special facilities of diet as quickly as I get them, is another question. I see visitors once every week, instead of once every three months, and there is no restriction at all on the number of letters I can write. In justification of this, I have told myself that I have no personal friends and that I do not see relations because they are relations, but my seeing them serves a moral aim. I write letters with the same aim. Whether there is an element of self-indulgence lurking behind this, I do not know. But it is not likely to be so, for, if interviews and writing letters stopped, I would not be perturbed. In the year 1930 I had stopped seeing visitors when a condition laid down by me was rejected.[3] In 1922 I had similarly stopped writing letters.[4] Apart from these

[1] *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, gives only the initial letter "S" of the addressee's name. The addressee had questioned how Gandhiji could advise others to forgo privileges while he himself enjoyed them; why we are grieved to see an ailing or dying man; why we thank God if he survives; why Gandhiji had himself so thanked God when Manilal was saved; what the span of human life was, etc.

[2] This name is omitted in the source.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XLIII, pp. 434 and 435.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 137.

reasons, there is another reason too, namely, that I am kept apart from other prisoners. For all these reasons, a comparison between other prisoners and me would not be right. However, I don't think it proper on my part to try to convince anybody in this matter with arguments if the difference is not self-evident to him. There is certainly some difference between the case of a person for whom 'A' class has been secured through outside influence and that of another who has got it in the normal course, but the difference is not worth stressing. The ideal, of course, is that there should be no classes and, therefore, prisoners who have been put in the so-called upper classes should give up their privileges. Very few persons yet follow this ideal in practice, and so I do not feel inclined to put any burden on a young woman like . . . . She is a very thoughtful woman. I am sure she exercises of her own accord whatever self-control she is capable of.

My praying for Manilal was not a sign of my spirituality but was a sign of a father's love for his son. There can be only one right prayer, that God may do what He wills. Of course the question can be asked what purpose such a prayer serves. The reply to it is that the meaning of the prayer is not to be understood literally. We are aware of the presence of God in our heart, but, for the moment we imagine him to be external to us and pray to Him in order that we may be delivered from ignorance. In other words, we do not wish to follow wherever the mind drags us. If, however, God is external to us, we wish to follow Him wherever He, our Master, leads us. We do not know whether it is good for us that we should live or that we should die. Hence we should not rejoice that we are alive or tremble at the thought of death. We should look upon life and death as equal and be indifferent to them. This is the ideal. We should not give it up because we cannot reach it all at once or only rare persons can reach it. On the contrary, the more we realize its difficulty the harder should be our effort to reach it.

The full span of a man's life can exceed even 100. But however long a man may live, his life is not even one ten-millionth of a moment in the infinite cycle of time. Why, then, should we be eager to live a long life and try to determine its maximum span? Any figure we determine will never be exact. We can only guess what the maximum span of human life can be. In actual life we even see a healthy child die suddenly. Nor can we say that a sensual man will not enjoy a long life. At the most we can say that a person whose life has always been simple and pure will very probably enjoy a long life. But those who acquire control over the

senses in order that they may enjoy a long life only dig up a mountain in order to find a mouse. We should acquire control over the senses in order that we may know the self. We should not care if, as a result of such control, our life becomes shorter instead of longer. A healthy and long life is the least important benefit of freedom from the cravings of the senses.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 162-4

554. LETTER TO BABALBHAI MEHTA

May 20, 1932

CHI. BABALBHAI,

We should do a thing to please elders if it is not immoral. It cannot be a matter of dharma to sing group-prayers aloud. Hence you cannot offer satyagraha to get freedom to do so. There is no loss of self-respect at all in giving finger-prints in a jail. The practice of obtaining prisoners' finger-prints has no bearing on the fear of their running away.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9452. Also C.W. 9115. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

555. A LETTER

May 20, 1932

You should not be in the least disappointed at seeing no immediate result whatever of your work. We should stick to the work undertaken, in single-minded devotion to it, with the faith that service done with pure motives, selflessly and as sacrifice to the Lord never fails to bear fruit. We even know that often in the past men gave their whole lives to some good cause and the fruits were enjoyed only by those who came after them. It should not be a matter of any wonder if four or five years of work by men like us yield no results in a poor, despairing region like Orissa, where several people may have gone under the pretext of public service and robbed the people. On the contrary, it would be a matter for wonder if such a brief period yielded any results. Besides, you actually see the beginning of some results. Your field of work lies there, and you and your co-workers should stick to it with

the conviction that it is also the place where you can attain self-realization. I was glad to learn this time that all of you are in good health. As you get more and more accustomed to the climate there and the mind remains cheerful, that will have its good effect on your health too.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9116. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

556. *A LETTER*

May 20, 1932

Give up all idle thoughts and constantly wish the good of all living creatures. The more you do so the more peace of mind you will enjoy.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9113. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

557. *LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI*

May 20, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

Kusum is still a child in some ways. Very often a child learns only through bitter experience. If she takes rest in Ranavav now, she will be all right.

If you do not improve, you too should go somewhere outside.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 854. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

558. *LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL*

May 20, 1932

CHI. PUSHPA,

Your handwriting is improving now. Children should go from the prayer directly to bed.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3989. Also C.W. 35. Courtesy: Pushpabehn N. Naik

559. *LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI*

May 20, 1932

If you saw with your own eyes the interest I am taking in your spinning-wheel, you would feel so happy that you would add a pound or two to your weight in a few days. I had resolved to try it even before the [left] arm had started paining, but now I am obliged to make a virtue out of necessity. Either I must give up spinning altogether or must spin on the Magan spinning-wheel. Necessity being the mother of invention, I will go on trying to discover ways and means of increasing the speed of spinning which I have attained on this spinning-wheel. Meanwhile, come and see me when you are released, if I see visitors at that time, and teach me some new trick.

मत्पर: [devoted to Me] means सत्यपर: [devoted to Truth]. In the line "Fix my mind on Thy lotus-like feet", the poet, a lover of God, personified Truth by using the phrase "Thy lotus-like feet"—which means the lotus-like feet of the God of Truth. Truth has no body. Everybody, therefore, imagines it in the form which appeals to him. Once we realize that the form which we worship is a creation of our imagination, each one of us may have his own form and there may be countless such forms as there are countless human beings. All these will be true so long as the imagination which believes in them is a living reality, for they meet the spiritual needs of the devotees. In truth, the various names like Vishnu, Maheshvar, Brahma, Bhagavan, Ishvar, etc., have no meaning or have a meaning which is imperfect. 'Truth' is the only term which is perfect as a description of God. If somebody tells us that he is ready to lay down his life for God, he will not be able to explain what he means, and most of us would not understand his meaning. On the contrary, a person who says that he would die for truth knows what he means and most of us also would understand it. You ask me what the name Rama means. My explaining the meaning of that name and then your doing the *japa*[1] will be practically fruitless. The *japa* of Ramanama will be a *kamadhenu*[2] for you only if you do it with the

[1] Repetition of a holy formula, name, etc.

[2] A mythical cow that was supposed to give whatever was asked of her

thought that Rama signifies that which you wish to worship. If you do the *japa* with this thought, you may do it even parrot-like. There will be a conscious decision of the will behind your *japa*, but none behind a parrot's repetition of the name. This is a big difference, so much so that you can win deliverance with this *japa* because of that decision of the will. Because there is no such decision of the will behind the parrot's repetition, it will soon get tired of it and give it up. If it is repeating the name to please its master, it will stop as soon as it has got its reward in the form of the daily feed. Thus, you do not need any symbol with a definite meaning. It is to emphasize this that Tulsidas held the name Rama to possess greater power than Rama the man. In other words, he implied that the name need not have any meaning. The meaning will be created subsequently by the devotee according to the nature and quality of his *bhakti*. That is the beauty of the practice of such *japa*. If this were not so, one could not say that *japa* would produce spiritual awakening even in the dullest of men, for it is a statement which cannot be proved with logical arguments. There is only one condition [for the practice of *japa* to bear fruit]. *Japa* should not be done for the sake of show or to deceive people. It should be done in the manner I have explained, with conscious purpose and with faith. Personally, I have no doubt at all that such *japa* would fulfil the highest aspiration of the devotee who keeps it up without losing faith. Anybody who has the needful patience may try and see whether this is true. In the beginning for days or even for years the mind will wander and will become restless in the course of the *japa*, or one will feel sleepy. Even more painful consequences may follow. If, despite all this, one keeps up the practice, it is beyond a shadow of doubt that it will bear fruit in due course. We acquire control over even a physical thing like the spinning-wheel after our patience has been sufficiently tried. Some other things are still more difficult, and we succeed in acquiring proficiency in them only after much harder labour. What, then, shall we say of a man who aspires to win the highest thing in the world but does not go on taking for a long time the medicine recommended to him and yields to despair all too soon? I think what I have said above answers all your questions, for, after reading it, you can have nothing more to ask. If you can have faith, go on with the *japa* at all times, whether you are working or eating or resting. You must not yield to despair, even if you have to do this for the whole of your life. Try

this, and doubt not that you will daily enjoy more and more peace of mind.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 164-6

560. *LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI*

May 20, 1932

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I am enclosing a letter from Prabhudas. I have given an answer[1] to his spiritual problems. As for the Almora land, I have said that the idea of buying the land has been given up as no responsible person is at present in a position to stay there and Pantji[2] is also away. I have also written to him at length about the Magan spinning-wheel on which I have been spinning and over which I have acquired some control for the last four days or so. I think he will be happy to read that I have also added that he might come and see me when he is released, if I see visitors then. As for Lakshmi, Devidatta's sister, I have said that I will do the needful. You have to reply to all the remaining points. He is in excellent health and does not seem to have any trouble now. It seems he would desire a change of place when the monsoon sets in and it rains heavily. The letter has been censored at several places and this is my guess from the portions not struck off by the officials. However that may be, a request for a transfer should not be made and certainly cannot be made from here. Dr. Talwalkar may make the suggestion if he thinks it fit and wishes to do so. I do not have the fear which Prabhudas has. But no one can tell, and when the patient himself is afraid, his fear itself brings about what he fears.

As for Khushalbhai, I guess from the letter which I have received that he has got a new lease of life for a time. All three of us are well.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 37

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] Govind Vallabh Pant

561. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

May 21, 1932

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

I hope Mavo[1] has completely recovered now. Write to Valji and tell him from me that he should demand the food which he requires. He should not think that he cannot get it. For reasons of health, even 'C'-class prisoners get milk, etc. I will write to Nanu[2] about study.

I was glad that you got the opportunity to nurse Gangadevi. The lady has become immortal through her death.

Do write to me from time to time.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7431. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

562. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

May 21, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I got your letter. Convey the sympathies of us all to Tehminabehn[3]. God has ordained death as well as birth. We, therefore, should not rejoice at the one and grieve over the other. Everything has two sides, or rather, the two are one and the same thing. In our eagerness to live, we believe death to be different from life and something bad. I have read Hazrat's *ghazal* twice already. I shall read it again to understand it thoroughly.[4]

Please be satisfied with this much exercise for today, I take some time to write so much, as I write with the reed-pen and take great care to see that the handwriting is good. Please forgive me for forgetting to reply to your question. I thought I had replied to it. There is no doubt at all that your duty is to stay with Mother. That is to be the form of your *sadhana*[5] and

[1] & [2] Sudarshan Desai and Vimalchandra Desai, addressee's sons

[3] Tehmina Khambhatta

[4] Up to this the letter is in Urdu.

[5] Self-dedication

also your service. I am, therefore, glad that you have made this choice. Always remain satisfied with it. I hope the Abu climate did good to you all. Does Father dance in his usual fashion? There he must have become a young man again. After the Bombay madness we have to forget our dancing and our playing. I can never understand how man can fight man in the name of religion. But let me check my thoughts and my pen. At present I am drinking cupfuls of this poison.

Send the book when you all return to Baroda.

Many many *salaams* and *vandematarams* to Father and Mother from us all.

When is Hamida's time for release?

Many blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I heard on Saturday that Hamida had been released. Is the information correct? If it is, she should write to me a full account [of her stay in jail].[1]

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9644

563. LETTER TO VIMALCHANDRA V. DESAI

May 21, 1932

CHI. NANU,

I got no letter from you this week. When will you now start taking interest in study? Children learn even as they play. In prison here, even kittens learn. Their mother teaches them. If you want to know how she does it, you may listen to my account[2] which I give in a letter to someone else.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5756. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] The postscript, written in Urdu, seems to have been written or 23; *vide* "Diary, 1932", entry under "May 23".

[2] *Vide* the following item.

564. *THE CAT – A TEACHER*[1]

May 22, 1932

I have already written about our cat's love of cleanliness.[2] Observing her and her kittens' ways, I feel that she is an ideal teacher. Whatever they have to be taught, she teaches quietly and without any fuss. The method is quite easy. She demonstrates to them by her own example what she wishes to teach, and the kittens learn the thing very quickly. In this manner they learnt to run, climb trees and come down again carefully to eat, to kill a prey and to lick their bodies and clean them. In a very short time they have learnt to do all that their mother can do.

The cat does not leave the kittens alone for long. Her love for them is just like that of a woman's for her children. She sleeps with the kittens clinging to her. When they indicate a desire to suck, she lies down and lets them do it. If she has killed a prey, she brings it to them. Vallabhbhai gives them some milk every day. All three of them lick it from a saucer. Sometimes the mother only looks on without sharing the milk. She plays with them as if she were their own age, and even engages in a sort of wrestling with them.

I have drawn a lesson from all this, namely, that if we wish to educate children properly we should ourselves do what we want to teach them to do. Children have great capacity for imitating others. They do not easily understand what is explained to them orally. If we wish to teach them truthfulness, we ourselves should be scrupulously truthful. If we wish to teach them not to keep with them more things than they need, we, too, should not do that. And what is true about moral rules is true about bodily labour.

Looking at the matter in this light, we immediately see that the present-day education produces very little result, considering the expenditure of money and time which it involves. We also realize that all grown-ups are teachers so far as children are concerned. It is because people do not pay proper attention to their duty as teachers that education has degenerated.

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 19/23-5-1932; *vide* pp. 470-2.

[2] *Vide* pp. 412-4.

Creatures like cats have no reason, or say, they do not have reason like man's. We, therefore, should do much more than what they do. But before we can do so, as guardians of the moral character of the next generation we should observe moral principles in our own lives. We should learn, to the best of our ability, to live as we wish the next generation to live.

I have written all this with the hope that all men and women inmates of the Ashram who give their services as teachers, and others too, may think along these lines and, wherever necessary, act accordingly.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

565. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

May 22, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

I understand all you are doing. Only you must not work yourself into anxiety. If we simply make ourselves instruments of His will, we should never have [an] anxious moment.

Yes, there is no calm without a storm, there is no peace without strife. Strife is inherent in peace. We should not know it without [strife]. Life is a perpetual struggle against strife whether within or without. Hence the necessity of realizing peace in the midst of strife.

It has been hot in Poona this time. As a rule it is never so hot in Poona. But the rains are now coming in and we are having beautiful sunsets and sweet songs of the birds.

Have you been to that patient[1] again?

I told you Mahadev was with me. He spins and cards about five hours daily. He is now spinning very fine counts. Owing to weakness of my hands I cannot do much. I hope you are keeping well.

Love from us all and kisses to the children.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 110. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, p. 90

[1] The cripple girl; *vide* p. 15.

566. LETTER TO NAN AND TANGAI MENON

May 22, 1932

DEAR NAN AND TANGAI,

You have sent me a sweet letter.

I see you are making friends with birds. We have made friends with a cat and her kittens. I call her sister. It is delightful to watch her love for her young ones. She teaches them all sorts of things by simply doing them.

God bless you.

With kisses,

BAPU

My Dear Child, p. 117

567. LETTER TO P. C. RAY[1]

May 22, 1932

The work you are doing is difficult, but it is the only way to help our people. There is no substitute for charkha for universal relief.

It is nonsense for you to talk of old age so long as you outrun young men in the race for service and in the midst of anxious times fill rooms with your laughter and inspire youth with hope when they are on the brink of despair.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 169-70

568. LETTER TO ARUN DAS GUPTA[2]

May 22, 1932

Mother[3] tells me you are ailing and that you insist on reading and working. Will you not give yourself rest and the body a chance of recovery? Though death and life are the faces of the same coin and though we should die as cheerfully as we live, it

[1] Dr. P. C. Ray, known as Acharya Ray, scientist and educationist; *vide* also "Tribute to P. C. Ray", p. 476.

[2] Son of Satis Chandra Das Gupta

[3] Hemprabha Das Gupta

is necessary until life is there to give the body its due. It is a charge given to us by God. And we have to take all reasonable care about it. Do write to me if you can. God bless you.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 168

569. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

May 22, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I had given a reply to Pyarelal's questions. Did you convey it to him? He doesn't seem to have received any message from me.

The letter[1] to you ought to be published.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1838

570. A LETTER

May 22, 1932

CHI.,

We ourselves are the source of *moha*[2]. There are two powers dwelling within us: the divine and the demoniac, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The demoniac is the source of *moha*. Why should we not fix our minds on the true Mahadeva instead of on His image made of earth? Or rise from the inert matter to spirit? If we cling to the trunk, we automatically get hold of the branch. If, on the contrary, we cling to the branch, the branch will break and we shall fall with it. It is no sin to think about people with whom we are related by blood. However, we wish to enlarge our definition of blood-relations so as to include in it all people. If we make a distinction between 'ours' and 'the others', we suffer in innumerable ways. If we imbibe the truth that the two are the same, there will remain the pain of neither separation nor death. Do not look upon this as philosophical or difficult knowledge and be scared by it. It deserves to be digested. Such an attitude of mind means not diminishing of love but its enlargement. In truth, we always go on, knowingly or unknowingly,

[1] From the addressee's husband

[2] Infatuation, ignorant attachment

enlarging our idea of 'ours'. If we carefully grasp this supremely valuable law, it leads to very important results.

From all I have written, accept only as much as you can digest, and leave the rest. The rule that applies to food applies here also.

I hope that the change of climate will do you good.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9117. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

571. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

May 22, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Even silence for five minutes can serve many purposes. It also means rest. If the Ashram cat makes a mess all over the place, you must take it that it has acquired the bad habit from us. No man has influenced the cat here.[1]

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9947. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

572. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

May 19/23, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter on Wednesday morning. If you think that I am doing any injustice to Harilal, please tell me. I say this because you have not said in your letter what you decided after reading my letter[2] to Harilal. Provided you observe the three conditions I have mentioned, you may do all you can. I can have no objection then.

If you have found any improvement as a result of the period of silence having been increased to five minutes, please let me know.

Lady Vithaldas, Mathew and Manibehn came and saw me. Mirabehn will not be permitted. The decision has been a great blow to her. I feel that if the gates are not opened to her, I

[1] *Vide* pp. 413 and 466-7.

[2] This is not available; however, *vide* pp. 374-5.

should stop seeing any visitors. I have even written a letter[1] to the Government (very nearly) to this effect. It is probable, therefore, that the next week will be the last during which I shall be seeing visitors. And even of that I am not certain, for, if I get a negative reply before that, I will stop seeing visitors immediately. I, therefore, also intend to drop a postcard to you today. If you get it in time, it should be in your hands on Sunday. If you do get it and if you do not receive a wire from me not to come, it might be advisable for you to start soon. Provided, that is, you think it necessary to come and see me. This applies to Premabehn and Sushila too.

I think it will be difficult to make the labourers give up smoking. It would of course be good if you succeed. But it would be most undesirable if they agree to give it up for fear of losing their jobs or any other similar reason and then continue to smoke on the sly. One labourer may be a smoker and still be good in other ways, while another who does not smoke may be a very bad man. Of the two, the one who smokes is a far better person. Hence, while paying attention to the habits of those whom you engage as labourers, pay as much attention as you can to their inner character as well.

I was glad to learn that Dhiru and Kusum have gone to Ranavav. Don't let them return to the Ashram all too soon. We may be sure that those who have understood the meaning of the Ashram rules of life and have fallen in love with that life will carry the Ashram wherever they go. Moreover, if Dhiru and Kusum, who have spent many years in the Ashram, cannot observe the Ashram rules even while living away from it, it will only show that they have learnt nothing from their stay in the Ashram. Anybody who has understood the meaning of the Ashram life can serve wherever he lives. The field of service is as wide as the world, and opportunities for it exist everywhere. Dhiru and Kusum, therefore, ought not to get impatient. If the water of Ranavav agrees with them and their health improves, let them stay there till they get completely all right.

Pyare Ali, Noorbanu and Tilakam have not come [to see me till now]. If you sent any messages with Mathew, they remained with him, for he could not speak much.

I have received no letter from Ba so far. Maybe her letters have not been dispatched from there. They don't seem to keep back any letter here. If any of you can, please inquire from the

[1] *Vide* "Letter to E. E. Doyle", pp. 452-3.

Superintendent whether they have been dispatched. In any case Ba can certainly inquire.

May 20, 1932

Are there any Chharas still staying near the Ashram? If there are, have you cultivated contacts with them? Do they harass you in any way? Why do the Ashram inmates keep a watch [at night]? For how many hours is the watch kept? Who are the persons taking turns? Who stays in Doctor's bungalow? Who stays in Jyotirbhavan? I send with this a letter from Chhaganlal, along with one from Prabhudas to me. Read both of them. There is a reference to Lakshmi in them. If Balkrishna agrees to accommodate her in Wardha, let her go and stay there. If Balkrishna does not agree or if the girl wants to stay in Sabarmati and if you see no difficulty in that, accommodate her there.[1] If you cannot do so and if Balkrishna is not prepared to accept the responsibility, write to Devidatta and inform him accordingly. And also to Prabhudas.

I can now say that I have acquired control over the Magan spinning-wheel. Today I spun 183 rounds in about 2½ hours. The yarn must be of about 16 counts. The slivers sent by Ramjibhai were full of hard particles, otherwise I think I could spin yarn of even higher count. The wheel still offers difficulties. I have often to use my hand and put the wheel in the right position. I believe this must be a defect. The pedal produces a low grating sound. Show this to Keshu. Ask him if he has any suggestion to make.

May 22, 1932

If you have not read out to the inmates of the Ashram the reminiscences of Gangadevi which Totaramji has sent, or given them a summary, you should do so. They are quite interesting.

May 23, 1932

Today I spun 89 rounds in 50 minutes. The count of the yarn, too, is 20.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

[1] *Vide* also p. 463.

573. LETTER TO ELIZABETH F. HOWARD[1]

May 23, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I was delighted to have your letter. I have a most vivid recollection of the very pleasant and peaceful time we had at your place.[2] From what I saw during those brief hours and in autumn I can easily picture all you say of Epping Forest in spring time.

It was a matter of sorrow to me that I could not see the friends who visited India recently to study the situation. Please give my regards to Mr. Bartlett and tell him that as soon as I received his letter enclosing the Poet's appeal I sent him my reply[3] which had naturally to pass through the Central Government. I do not know whether it was sent to him. Of course I cannot repeat the contents here.

I thank you for the extract from George Fox's writings.

Please give my regards to your mother who I hope will finish the century and accept the same for yourself. Yes, Desai is with me and wants to be remembered to you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 862

574. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

May 23, 1932

CHI. MANUDI,

I have your letter now, but I have been regularly getting news about you from others. I have collected a good many pictures for you. I had collected them during my last imprisonment but I could not meet you at all and give them to you. Some of those are still left, to which I go on adding more. You will get them sooner or later. The later you get them, the more precious they will be, won't they? I am glad that you do not wear ornaments.

[1] Addressee's name is supplied from the G.N. Register.

[2] Gandhiji visited the addressee at Ardmore, Buckhurst Hill, London, on September 20, 1931.

[3] *Vide* p. 397.

Never mind losing your hair. It will grow again. There is no beauty in wearing long hair. If there were any, one would look beautiful even with hair stuck on the head. Beauty lies in goodness of heart. If it was not so, the sight of glass or wax dolls would be enough to give us pleasure, and we would preserve the soulless body in a frame. The fact that we do not do so means that whatever beauty there is is in the soul. Can this be in anything except its qualities? One who realizes this will look upon the body as only a means for the progress of the soul.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Write to me and tell me whether you followed what I have said in this letter.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1513. Courtesy: Manubehn Mashruwala

575. LETTER TO BENARSILAL AND RUKMINI BAZAJ

May 23, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI,

This letter is meant for both of you. I got your card and was happy to learn that the little boy had recovered. It would be good if you can manage somehow to take him out for walks.

Rameshwardas's[1] letters suggest that he is very much troubled in mind. Benarsi can understand the reason better than I. He should do something in the matter if he can.

I have received some reminiscences of Gangadevi. She lived a pure life devoted to the service of others. Why is it that you do not get the *Ashram Patrika* there? Probably you have not asked for it.

Probably you have also not heard of the death of Dahyabhai's wife, Yashoda. Do you read newspapers, etc.?

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. RUKMINIDEVI AND SJT. BENARSIDAS
23/96 PANCHGANGA
KASHI, BANARAS, U.P.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9139

[1] Rukmini Bazaj's father-in-law, Rameshwarlal

576. LETTER TO HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR[1]

May 23, 1932

I do not remember any incident in my life which had particularly increased my faith in God. For some time I had no faith, but it began to grow when I started thinking and reflecting about religion, and it has gone on increasing ever since as I have come to feel more and more distinctly the presence of God in my heart. But why do you ask me this question? Is it with the intention of publishing my answer in a future issue of *Kalyan*? If so, it will serve no useful purpose. If you have asked it for your own guidance, I must tell you that in this matter another man's experience will not help you. Faith in God will increase only through ceaseless striving with such faith as you have.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 170

577. LETTER TO ABHAYDEV SHARMA

May 23, 1932

BHAI ABHAY,

I have been daily looking forward to your letter when at last I got one yesterday along with two copies of *Vaidik Vinaya*[2]. I had received a copy earlier. I will certainly read it and give you my comments if I have any to make. I like your becoming an Acharya[3], but I dislike it too. But I believe it on the whole to be right because this duty has come to you unsought. You will be able to perform some great service in this way. Where is Jayadev? Daya has impressed me very favourably through her letters. I see in her the makings of a true *sevika*.

[1] Mahadev Desai explains: "The addressee had asked Bapu if there had occurred any particular incidents in his life which strengthened his faith in God." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 125)

[2] An annotated compilation, by the addressee, of Vedic *mantras*, to be recited one on each day of the year

[3] Headmaster, preceptor

How is Ramdevji keeping and how is Vidyavati?

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI ABHAY ACHARYA
GURUKUL KANGRI
DISTRICT SAHARANPUR

From Hindi: C.W. 9661

578. *TRIBUTE TO P. C. RAY*[1]

May 24, 1932

Acharya Ray I had the privilege of knowing for the first time when Gokhale was his next-door neighbour in 1901 and I was undergoing tutelage under the latter. It was difficult to believe that the man in simple Indian dress and wearing simpler manners could possibly be the great scientist and professor he even then was. And it took my breath away when I heard that out of his princely salary he kept only a few rupees for himself and the rest he devoted to public uses and particularly for helping poor students. Thirty years have made no difference to the great and good servant of India. Acharya Ray has set us an example of ceaseless service, enthusiasm and optimism, of which we may well be proud.

M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. I

[1] On his seventieth birthday

579. *LETTER TO SATYACHARAN LAW*

May 24, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your circular letter about Acharya Ray's seventieth birthday celebration. I send you the accompanying humble tribute[1] in the hope that it would be allowed to reach your hands by the authorities.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. SATYACHARAN LAW
SECRETARY
ACHARYA RAY'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE
CALCUTTA

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. I

580. *LETTER TO MOOLCHAND PAREKH*

May 24, 1932

The Harijan Samiti's resolution seemed shocking to me. What guidance, however, can I give from here? How can a single school for Harijan children be closed while the members of the Samiti are alive? If they are sincere, they would sell themselves into slavery, would sell their property but continue to run every school. Instead of accepting defeat, therefore, you should have hope that when you come forward to sell yourselves, the people will buy you and pay the Samiti all the money it needs. You may doubt this, but I do not. Don't you remember Bhoja Bhagat's lash?

> *Bhakti* is a bargain in which you must stake your very life, for full of danger is the path ahead.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 171

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

581. A LETTER

May 24, 1932

Boys and girls should be married only after they have grown up. The partners should choose each other with the consent of their parents. Hence there is no unnatural restriction in such a method. If anybody asks my opinion, I would say that marriage between persons following different faiths was a risky experiment. If both husband and wife believe in their respective religions and actively follow them in their lives, difficulties are likely to arise between them. Thus I think that the Bhatia girl's marriage is a risky step, but I do not regard it as irreligious. I would not oppose it if their love is pure, if the Bhatia girl can follow her religion and the Muslim youth his and if their ideas about food are the same. But I do not advocate marriages between persons of different faiths as I advocate inter-caste marriages because I desire the disappearance of sub-castes. I would not agitate against such marriages either. This is an issue on which every man and woman should think and decide for himself or herself. There cannot be a uniform law for all.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 171

582. LETTER TO K. NATARAJAN

May 25, 1932

When I said that writing about the abuse of occult powers you might have been stronger,[1] I used the adjective precisely in the same sense in which I use it regarding admitted evils. I feel that whilst we should spare evil-doers, we dare not be sparing in our condemnation of evil. Perfect gentleness is not inconsistent with clearest possible denunciation of what one knows to be evil, so long as that knowledge persists; and there would need to be no cause for regret later if our knowledge of the past was found to be a great error of judgment. In our endeavour to approach absolute truth we shall always have to be content with relative

[1] This letter is not traceable for an earlier letter on the subject, *vide* p. 370.

truth from time to time, the relative at each stage being for us as good as the absolute. It can be easily demonstrated that there would be no progress if there was no such confidence in oneself. Of course our language would be one of caution and hesitation if we had any doubt about the correctness of our position. In the case in point, the motive of the exhibitor, no matter how excellent it may be, in my opinion would be no excuse for his exhibition, and the laziness of the spectators in not having thought out the consequences of their presence at such exhibitions is again no excuse for their presence. But I must not labour the point any further. I thought that as I could not endorse the position taken up by you in your letter[1], I should just place before you my argument for your consideration.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 177

583. *LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI*[2]

May 25, 1932

It is irrelevant to the point of the story either to praise or blame the man who carried the water. If you reflect a little, you will see that he could not force the soldiers to drink water. Nor is it to the point to ask whether there was enough water for three. Each of the first two soldiers, on hearing somebody else crying for water, refused to drink the water before that other soldier had got some. Hence we need not blame the man who carried the water for having failed in his duty. You do not seem to have visualized the situation.

[1] Which read: "As for my paragraph about occult powers which you feel might have been stronger, it is curious but I seem to have utterly lost the taste for and the knack of strong writing particularly in criticizing persons. When I take my pen intending to hit hard, the picture of the other man stands before my eyes and seems to say: 'You do not know what I have to say for myself. I too have ideals, however much they may be obscured by my conduct. Judge me as you would yourself.' I avoid all adjectives of judgement as poison and try in all that I say to be completely objective. This has become a habit, and I do not doubt that in all circumstances it is a healthy one. As regards this particular matter, the thought that after all the man takes his life in his hands weighs my judgment. As for the curious crowd, they, I suppose, find relief from the tyranny of daily circumstances in witnessing facts which show or seem to show that one man at least is able to rise above them." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 128)

[2] Misinterpreting Gandhiji's article "Wonderful Self-sacrifice" (pp. 433-5), the addressee had argued that the man who carried the water had failed in his duty, for he could have given some water to each of the three dying men.

When a person is extremely thirsty, he feels such intense craving for water that he does not care for anybody else and, if he himself gets any water, gulps it down. In this case the poor soldiers were nearing death. But even at that time they did not forget their goodness, which means that they remained in a spiritual state right to the end. The man who carried the water was quite helpless. In any case, was it possible for him to enter into argument with the wounded soldiers, who were drawing their last breath? If you think over all this and reflect a little, you will realize that this, which actually occurred, is an example of sublime and perfect self-sacrifice, and that the man who carried the water and accidentally became the cause of their death deserves no criticism at all. Generally, we do not come across such perfect examples in history. There is always some imperfection or other. But I see none in this.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 172-3

584. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJEE

May 25, 1932

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I got a letter from you after a long time. You certainly have my blessings. May you live long and render selfless service. Remember a noble verse which our people often recite:

> That which goes by the name of adversity is not such; nor is that prosperity which goes by that name. To forget God is adversity; ever to think of him is prosperity.[1]

That is, what people call misery is not real misery and what they call happiness is nothing of the sort. Real misery is forgetting God—that is, Truth, and real happiness is remembering Him.

My respectful greetings to Mother. I hope Gokibehn[2] is all right. Give my blessings to Sumati.

Sardar sends his blessings, and Mahadev his regards.

You may write to me anything you wish to.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4796. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarjee

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 390.

[2] Addressee's aunt

585. LETTER TO RELATIVES OF DARBARI SADHU

May 25, 1932

Please tell Darbari that there was no need for him to give up the *kasti*[1] and *sadra*[2], and that it would be proper for him to resume them as soon as he returned home. There is no sin in wearing them, nor is it superstitious to do so. By wearing them he does no harm to anybody, but by not wearing them he gives pain to other Parsis. It does not befit a servant of the people to give pain to anybody needlessly, and moreover such behaviour is a violation of ahimsa. It should be enough if one does not attach undue importance to these things. One should not idolize them, and he does not do that. The two things are only outward signs of one's being a Parsi, and I do not think it desirable from any point of view to discard them. I have asked Dahyabhai to bring for him books containing the teachings of Zoroaster. I have read Zoroaster's sayings. I read a translation of the Vendidad[3] many years ago. The work is rich in ethical teaching. Since Zoroastrianism is a very old faith, it is possible that all its scriptures have not survived and that those which are extant do not contain spiritual knowledge of the same order as the Upanishads and other works do. Darbari should read the extant works and reflect over them. But even today it is accepted that Zoroaster's teaching is based on that of the Vedas. As far as I remember, the translator of the Vendidad has pointed out a close similarity between Zend and Sanskrit. It is, therefore, in no way derogatory to Zoroastrianism or to the self-respect of the Parsi community to fill in the deficiencies which may be observed in the Parsi scriptures with the help of the Vedas and the Upanishads. In fact, it is our right, even our duty, while adhering to our own religion, to accept from other religions anything which specially appeals to us. It is fanaticism to think that we cannot adopt anything from other religions, and Darbari and all of us have grown out of it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 173

[1] & [2] Sacred thread and shirt worn by Parsis

[3] Videvdat, a later Avestan writing

586. LETTER TO BHUSKUTE[1]

May 25, 1932

What do you mean by asserting that there is no guiding force in the universe? How can we make such an assertion? My statement seems to have been somewhat twisted in this context. I have only said that Truth is identical with God and you may take it to be the Moving Spirit. In this context *karta*[2] does not have the meaning we usually attribute to it. Therefore Truth is *karta* as well as *akarta*[3]. But this is only an intellectual explanation. There is nothing wrong in this matter in believing whatever one's heart accepts, as no man has perfect knowledge of God nor can he express whatever little knowledge he has. It is true that I do not depend upon my intellect to decide upon any action. For me the reasoned course of action is held in check subject to the sanction of the inner voice. I do not know if others would call it the mysterious power or whatsoever. I have never deliberated upon this nor analysed it, I have felt no need of doing so either. I have faith, and knowledge, too, that a Power exists beyond reasoning. This suffices for me. I am unable to clarify this any further as I know nothing more in the matter.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 173-4

587. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[May 26, 1932][4]

CHI. MIRA,

I was waiting for your letter. It came today. The shock such as you received must be accepted as the common lot of those who would only serve their conscience. I shall take no hasty step. If, apart from the personal equation, I did not think it to

[1] Mahadev Desai explains: "Bhuskute had asked how Bapu acted according to the dictates of the inner voice while he believed that Truth is God and there is no Creator." (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, 127)

[2] Doer

[3] Non-doer

[4] "Date of Yeravda Postmark" —Mirabehn

be my duty to stop seeing others if I could not see you, I would not take that step. But let us wait and see.

Tulsidas's *Ramayana* is to me a work of great religious merit. I have not myself read Griffith's translation[1], but I knew that it was the best available and I am glad you have found it so good.

Don't you try to make envelopes there?[2] It is a fascinating occupation when you have the time. If you have weak persons having no occupation, they may try their hands at the thing. But not you. For you it would be an uneconomic use of time.

I was again 105½ lb. today. So you see there is no cause for anxiety.

I have now acquired sufficient control over the Magan wheel to make the work pleasurable. I spun 202 rounds in 82 minutes, i.e., 147 rounds per hour—not bad for me. I hope to do much better still.

Give my love to the Rollands and tell them I simply enjoyed that letter[3] to the American friend. Surely there was nothing [wrong] about it. And how can there be anything wrong in an honest expression of opinion?

Love to you all from us all.

BAPU

[PS.]

No separate letter to Radha.

From the original: C.W. 6223. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9689

588. A LETTER

May 26, 1932

Tell Chhotubhai that it is useless to think about his father's illness here. Why, then, should he go on worrying? His father is under the care of the great Father of us all. At present Chhotubhai is exempted by Him from serving as His instrument and nursing his father. He need not, therefore, think about the matter. It is a weakness to lose one's peace of mind. None of us can be wholly free from that weakness, but the more clearly we realize that we control nothing the more we shall enjoy peace of mind.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9121. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Of Valmiki's *Ramayana*

[2] "Bapu and specially Sardarji [Vallabhbhai Patel] were making envelopes for Bapu's letters." —Mirabehn

[3] Describing the meeting between Gandhiji and Romain Rolland in December 1931; *vide* Vol. XLVIII, Appendix II.

589. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

May 26, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. The letter I addressed to Gwalior was somewhat lengthy. I recollect this much but nothing of the contents. We must consider the views of the workers regarding working in three shifts and also the extent of the material and moral benefit to them from it. If they gain materially but lose morally, it will not be acceptable to me. I may be considered neutral as I have at present no means of ascertaining labour's point of view. I only hope that this change has been made with due regard for the labourers' attitude towards it. I have received two books. By two books is meant one pamphlet and the proof of your speech. Is it not? These two are with me. I have not been able to read them so far, as I could not take time off from the work on hand. I had to devote a good deal of time to working the charkha with the foot owing to pain in the left hand. And moreover I have taken up the study of Urdu. I shall now possibly save some time and use it for reading the two items. I distinguish between optimism and simplicity of heart. Panditji[1] is endowed with both. That person is an optimist who continues to hope despite the discouraging signs on the horizon and his own knowledge of them. This quality can be found in Panditji in plenty. To accept in good faith someone's encouraging utterances is simplicity of heart. Panditji possesses that too, which in my opinion is undesirable. Panditji, by virtue of his nobility, has come to no harm on account of this quality. But we should not emulate it. Optimism is dependent upon the inner voice while credulousness is dependent upon external factors.

I am not qualified to give any opinion on foreign travel. Ordinarily my views are well known.

My diet continues to be the same. The weight too is steady.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 7900. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Madan Mohan Malaviya

590. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

May 26, 1932

BHAI KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter. The man who has faith in God will never go to astrologers. Therefore in my view no action in deference to their prediction is called for. In fact I have observed on many occasions events happening contrary to the predictions and honest astrologers do admit that predictions merely indicate the possibility. Thus undoubtedly there is sufficient scope for individual effort. The meaning of the *Gita*, III. 33 is clear enough; our basic nature cannot be altered. The English saying that the leopard cannot change his spots also supports it. What is true of the skin is true of the inside too. That is why so many people are unable, in spite of great efforts, to change qualities ingrained in their nature.

Gulkand[1] can be taken in place of dates, raisins, etc., but it can never be as beneficial. It is difficult to specify the quantity; everyone has to find that by experience.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: S.G. 38. Also G.N. 4261

591. LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN

May [27][2]*, 1932*

MY DEAR VERRIER,

"Ask and ye shall receive" has been verified once more. Your lovely letter arrived here today. I read it after five and today being Friday, without any prompting from me, Mahadev gave effect to your sugggestion about fellowship by singing "Lead Kindly Light" in its very beautiful Gujarati version. At the evening service it is always Mahadev's part to sing the *bhajan*. The hour would be approximately 7.40. The prayer commences at 7.30 and opens with the 19 verses at the end of the second

[1] A preparation made from rose petals and sugar

[2] From the reference in the letter to "Friday", which fell on May 27. The source, however, has "26".

discourse of the *Gita*. It is followed by Ramanama and then comes the *bhajan*. As soon as I read your suggestion I had no hesitation in endorsing it, but I was debating as to the choice of the hymn. I had in mind the singing of the English text and so the choice was limited. It could either be "Lead Kindly Light" or "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" or "Take My Life And Let It Be" for the simple reason that I myself cannot very well sing any of the other favourite hymns of mine—not that even these three I sing accurately. But it would be a fair approach to the tune as I have heard it. Mahadev is unused to the tune of English hymns, but by thinking of taking up the Gujarati version of "Lead Kindly Light", Mahadev solved the difficulty about the choice and singing. There is a special fitness about the choice of this hymn of Newman's. It was that hymn which, when I was in physical distress, was sung to me by Olive Doke in Johannesburg under the late Rev. Doke's roof.[1] So you may take it that we shall be here singing this hymn at 7.40 every Friday evening with the knowledge that you at least will be joining us wherever you are, whether the suggestion is taken up or not by the other friends. Let there be no Press publicity about this at the present moment. I do not know that the Government will appreciate it and from my place as a prisoner I would not like to do a single thing that they would not approve of, unless of course I had to engage in an open quarrel with them in any vital matter. I shall be asking Narandas to sing this *bhajan* on Fridays at the Ashram prayer which during summer months always begins at 7.30.

Yes, I like very much, if only for the sake of the old lady and Eldyth[2], the idea of your going to England for a few months and you certainly need the change for the sake of your health. And since you should be going, the sooner you leave the better.

I do not like the idea of Mother and Eldyth coming to village India or any other India. The spirit with them may be willing but the flesh will not respond. You yourself are no bright example in this respect, and it would be unwise to put the strain on them of settling down in India. It would be however a wholly different thing if, independently of any prompting on your or anybody else's part, they felt the clearest possible call from within. But in that case, there would be no question of seeking or accepting

[1] In February 1908; Gandhiji was taken care of by the Rev. Joseph Doke after the assault on him by Mir Alam; *vide* Vol. VIII, pp. 94-5; also Vol. XXIX, pp. 137-41.

[2] Addressee's younger sister

advice from any quarter. Such cases have of course happened before now. There the spirit surmounts the flesh.

I do not at all like the news about Shamrao's illness. He should be ashamed of himself. He must learn the art of living, befitting a true servant of *Daridranarayana*.

The passages[1] you quote from Plotinus are very striking and very beautiful. The first is good for all time, the second the modern mind will carp at. I have personally no difficulty in understanding the author's meaning.

During your absence and Shamrao's, who will be in charge of Karanjia?

With love from us all to you all, including your host and hostess,

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. I, p. 233

592. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*[2]

May 27, 1932

In a long letter to Devdas Gandhi, Bapu paid a generous tribute to Narandas Gandhi, the Ashram Secretary, "who, by his firmness, patience, courage, renunciation and good judgement, has relieved all my anxiety about the Ashram." . . . As regards his Urdu studies, Bapu wrote to Devdas Gandhi:

There are lessons on history in each reader. Some of them deal with the Prophet and his times, while others are concerned with Muslim rulers in India. The standpoint from which these are written should be understood by everyone. I have an increasing realization of the importance of Urdu studies. By learning to write a language in its own script we can write letters in it. Moreover we thus also acquire greater mastery over the language, and are better able to decipher as well as understand letters received by us. I believe we should learn how to write Urdu letters to Muslim co-workers. If we are compelled to write to them in English, Hindi can never take its legitimate place as the national language. That is why I think that ability to write in Urdu is an essential part of our mental equipment.

[1] For the passages and discussion on them, *vide The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 133-5.

[2] The translation is reproduced from *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I,

He then referred to the circumstances in which he began to write Urdu letters to Raihana Tyabji and said:

All these are non-violent and delicate means of establishing friendly relations with Mussalmans.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 181-2

593. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

May 28, 1932

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I have read both your letters. Your Urdu writing is not clear enough for me. I gave nearly an hour to it and could only get the substance of your letter. I gather that it is only a paraphrase of your English letter. If you can keep your head cool and composed, I think you should stay with the family for the time being and then go to the Ashram. If you find it impossible to be at peace with yourself living with your people, you should stay with Noorbanu.

Does this answer all your questions? If not, write again and that in English. Write partly in Urdu also.

I shall write to Dr. Sharma.

I was glad you were able to come. You must regain the lost weight.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 250

594. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

May 28, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I doubt if there was any moral obligation on the pupils of your guru, the late Panditji, to do something in his memory and pay their debt to him. But, since all of you felt that something must be done, you were bound to do what you did.

Write a letter to Lakshmibehn and send it with somebody there who may be coming this way. Or ask Narandas to write. Sometimes I come to know about a thing only after it is over.

I hope Rambhau is all right now. He who rides may fall too,

I look upon the problem of untouchability from a purely religious point of view. There must be, therefore, no separate electorates in any case. But the reservation of seats for them, if it is statutory, will not test the caste Hindus and, therefore, will not be a real *prayashchitta*[1] on their part. We cannot bargain with the 'untouchables'. What is necessary is that the suspicion which they harbour in their minds should go. If you still do not understand my position, please ask me again. Please take care that these views do not find their way into print in any circumstances.

There is a possibility of the visits coming to a stop.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 227. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

595. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA N. KHARE

May 28, 1932

CHI. RAMBHAU,

You should not worry about the injury to the bone. Such accidents happen to anyone who does physical exercises. I hope the bone has now been properly set.

Your reply was very helpful to me. Following your suggestion, I have been able to stop touching the wheel with the hand. I have understood the trick, though I have not yet mastered it.

You still make mistakes in your Gujarati. Avoid them and improve your handwriting. My compliments to you on regaining your weight.

When you are entrusted with a responsible job, look upon it as an opportunity to render more service and to be more humble.

Monetary help should be given only to a person who is really in need of it. And it is properly given when it is given at the right time and without any feeling of pride that one was helping somebody.

Non-violence means that we should not give pain to anybody for our good. It comprises both such a state of mind and such conduct.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 293. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] Atonement

596. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI

May 28, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMI (BORIVALI[1]),

If you used a small slip only for economy and if you use such slips when writing to everybody, what you did was right.

How did Kaka get eczema? Who are there with him?

I write to Gangabehn every week.

If you make a mistake when writing in ink, you may certainly strike out the word or words.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2811. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

597. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

May 29, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

This is silence time. I have your longish letter—none too long for me. I forgot last time to tell you I had received the book you sent me. I shall read it as soon as I can. Every minute is pre-mortgaged. Any new reading or other work that comes my way has therefore to await its turn unless it is of such paramount importance as to warrant suspension of current work.

Feeling is of the heart. It may easily lead us astray unless we would keep the heart pure. It is like keeping house and everything in it clean. The heart is the source from which knowledge of God springs. If the source is contaminated, every other remedy is useless. And if its purity is assured nothing else is needed.

This is written with the right hand, for the left has become worse than the right. There is nothing to worry about. Only, it must have complete rest. I therefore spin on a wheel which has a pedal and draw the thread with the right hand.

We are three — all well.

[1] A suburb of Bombay

Love from us all. Kisses to the children.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 111. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, p. 91

598. LETTER TO GOSIBEHN CAPTAIN

May 29, 1932

Your welcome letter. I don't expect Jalbhai to trouble to write to me. I expect you, the nurses, to do that work. A patient has to eat, sleep, complain and bully. He is an angel when he omits to do the two last things. I hope the crutches will go.

I am no good at choosing books for others, even for you, though so near to me. The book of life is really the book to read and that you are doing more or less. The other is amusement for those who have no service. One would think that here at least one would have plenty of time to read. Well, spinning and preparatory studies leave little time for reading for amusement. But I must stop this lecturing.

Are you keeping well? Has Nargisbehn lost her headache? The Government's reply regarding her is that I am not to see her. Evidently they think that she is taking an active part in politics or that she suffers from contamination.

Now it is my left hand's turn not to be used. Can it be old age knocking vigorously at my door?[1]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 185-6

599. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

May 29, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I write this letter though I had none from you this week, for when it reaches the Ashram, you too will have returned and will probably expect a letter from me.

I was happy that all of you came and saw me. Of course, we did not have much to talk about, and in any case the time was too short. I deliberately did not give time to Sushila alone.

1. The source has this paragraph in Gujarati.

Whatever time was permitted to me had to be divided among you, Amtul and Sharda. Did Sushila have anything particular to ask me?

In their letters to me, I am afraid the boys and the girls put to me all sorts of pointless questions, and that too merely for the sake of asking some questions. Explain this carefully to them once. Writing letters also requires to be taught to some extent.

I shall look forward to an account of your experience of the visits.

Did you see Dhurandhar? Anybody else?

I hope you have succeeded in increasing your weight.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10287. Also C.W. 6735. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

600. LETTER TO VENILAL GANDHI

May 29, 1932

CHI. VENILAL,

I got your letter. Your illness was such that you are bound to take time to regain strength. Try to regain it patiently.

You have practically got a new life. Make the best use of it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 917. Courtesy: Venilal Gandhi

601. LETTER TO DAUDBHAI

May 29, 1932

I welcomed your letter. Fight like a lion bad thoughts and impulses. It is our duty to fight. Whether we shall win rests with God. We should be content with fighting. But our fighting must be sincere. Seek the company of the good. For that, you should read good books. In a city like Bombay, reading good books is the only way of being in the company of the good. According to me, the sight of Noorbanu is also uplifting like the company of the good. She is a truthful and pure lady.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 187

602. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA[1]

May 29, 1932

Received the letter from Venice. Let me know how you passed your time on the steamer, what things you observed during the voyage and how you spent your money, so that I may have an idea of your powers of description and of what you regard as simplicity. . . .[2] Take walks for exercise and make yourself physically fit. Do not get others to do what you can do for yourself. Do not use a conveyance in order to reach a place if you can negotiate the distance on foot. Fight against cold by exercise, not by sitting near the fire place. . . .[3]

Write to your father regularly. Send him a statement of accounts from time to time. Remember that parents can never have enough of letters from their children. They are interested in the minutest details about them. Fulfil your father's expectations about you.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 186-7

603. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

May 29, 1932

CHI. BHAU[4],

I have your letter. Send me only as much [portion] of Vinoba's discourse as you conveniently can. If possible, write in ink. Did you take it down while Vinoba was discoursing or did Vinoba himself write it out? Training in *takli* is progressing well. It will be very good if all the Ashram inmates learn it.

The silence period was lengthened from one minute to five minutes in order to give people greater peace.[5] It appears that all the people were much too distracted. Concentration will be greatly helped if all observe silence with a willing heart.

[1] The translation is reproduced from *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I.

[2] & [3] Omission as in the source

[4] A co-worker of Vinoba

[5] *Vide* p. 415.

To meditate upon the image of a living person is not proper. The object of concentration is expected to be, and ought to be, perfect, but how can we call any living person perfect? The illustrations in the *Ramayana* and similar works are worthless. But why do we need a concrete image? God is without form or attributes. Why not concentrate one's thoughts on Him? If that is impossible, a form or an imaginary figure, may be meditated upon. Why not meditate upon the *Gita*? It has been compared to the *kamadhenu*. Let us meditate on this; we can gain much from it. However it be, meditation upon living persons is harmful; so it should be avoided.

Write to Rameshwarji that I have already sent him three or four letters.

Krishnadas informed me that Vinoba had started grinding flour and that Jamnalalji had lost 20 lb. in weight.

Here are some remedies for constipation. They can all be tried simultaneously.

1. Drink hot water with salt and lemon-juice in the morning; Salt can be substituted by jaggery or honey.

2. Sleep with an abdominal mud-pack at night.

3. Give up pulses for some time.

If you do not benefit with this treatment within three days, follow it up by eating only boiled greens for the next three days. Eat them hot. *Tandalja* is the best among the greens. You can take salt and lemon-juice on it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6729. Also C.W. 4472. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

604. LESSON OF DEATH[1]

May 30, 1932

So far as I remember, the following deaths have occurred in the Ashram till now: Fakiri, Vrajlal, Maganlal, Gita, Meghji, Vasant, Imam Saheb and Gangadevi. (It would be desirable to record the dates on which these persons died).

Fakiri's death cannot be described as one befitting an inmate of the Ashram. The Ashram had been recently established

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 26/30-5-1932; *vide* the following item.

when he died and he had not imbibed its moral and spiritual influence. He was no doubt a brave boy. I have made the foregoing remark as he died a victim of gluttony. His death was a test for me. I remember that I sat up, alone, by his side for the whole night on the last day of his life. In the morning, I had to catch a train for Gurukul. I watched the bier being borne away and then, hardening my heart to stone, took the road to the station. Fakiri's father had entrusted him and his three brothers to me, knowing that I would make no distinction between them and others. When Fakiri had gone, I lost the other three brothers too.

Vrajlal had joined the Ashram when he was well advanced in years and met his death while doing an act of service, thus winning immortal fame for himself and bringing glory to the Ashram. He had descended into a well to bring up a child's pot and, while climbing up, because of fatigue lost his grip of the rope and fell and died.

Gita passed away peacefully, hearing verses from the *Gita.* Meghji was an undisciplined child, but he preserved wonderful peace during his illness. In most cases children suffer a great deal when seriously ill and are difficult patients to nurse. But Meghji was an almost ideal patient. Vasant did not have to be nursed for a long time. A fatal attack of smallpox carried him away in a day or two. His death was a painful test for Panditji and Lakshmibehn, and they stood it well.

What shall I say about Maganlal? We are describing here the deaths which occurred in the Ashram. Hence Maganlal's name has no place in the list. But how can I leave it out? He had come into the world to serve the Ashram. As gold is tested in fire, Maganlal was tested in the fire of service, and passed away after proving his perfect worth. Everything that we see in the Ashram bears witness to Maganlal's devoted service.

Imam Saheb's was the only Muslim family in the Ashram and all the members were perfectly loyal to its ideals. His death has created an unbreakable bond between us and Muslims. Imam Saheb regarded himself as a representative of Muslims and had joined the Ashram as one. (I remember here Amina's two children. But they were only infants and there is little to say about them. Their deaths certainly teach us the necessity of self-control.)

Gangadevi's face is still vivid before my eyes, and I seem to hear her voice too. I still take pleasure in recalling memories of her. Her life teaches all of us, and particularly women, many lessons. Though practically illiterate, she possessed spiritual wisdom. She

was the only person who, of her own accord, refused to go for change of air though she could have gone. She looked after every child entrusted to her care as if it was her own. I do not remember any occasion when she had quarrelled with somebody or got angry. She was not attached to life. She did not fear death—she met it with a smile on her face. She knew the art of dying, for there is an art of dying as there is of living.

I have recalled all these deaths lest we forget what we are. Our earth is like a particle of sand in this vast universe. On that particle of dust we are, so far as our bodies are concerned, mere specks. We cannot count the number of ants in an ant-hill, and cannot even see with our naked eyes creatures smaller than the ant. In relation to the Cosmic Form of the Lord, we are smaller than even the invisible creatures on our earth. That is why there is perfect truth in the description of this body as *kshanabhangur*[1]. Why should we be attached to it? Why should we cause pain to a single ceature for its sake? Why should we move heaven and earth to preserve something which is more brittle even than glass? Death means nothing but the soul leaving that body. Why should we fear it, then? Why all this desperate struggle to delay its coming? Let us all, grown-up and young, ponder over this constantly and give up the fear of death, and, while the body lasts, spend it in the service of others. We recite daily the last 19 verses of Chapter II of the *Gita* in order that we may get the strength to live in this manner. We shall find in them what we seek only if they fill our very hearts.

PS.

After I had finished the foregoing, Mahadev reminds me of the deaths of Fatima, Kaki[2] and Valji's mother. But I leave the discourse as it is, since their inclusion would not affect the lesson which I have drawn. Even so, I may say that what I was told about these deaths fills my mind with holy thoughts.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I

[1] Momentary
[2] Wife of D. B. Kalelkar

605. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

May 26/30, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Premabehn, Sushila, Amtulbehn, Sharda, Noorbanu and Pyare Ali were here before I got your packet. When absolutely necessary you may increase the size of the party from five to six or even seven. But ordinarily it would be desirable to stick to five. Only this time the number was six, not counting Amina's children. I think it will be safer for you to stick to the limit I have given, so that you may not displease anybody. Vallabhbhai had concluded that you had dropped your name because there were already five names. Whether that is the reason or whether you did not come because you did not think it necessary to come, in either case it was all right. Probably, there will be no occasion for you to bear all this in mind. I have still not received the Government's decision in regard to Mirabehn. If it is in the negative, you may take it that I will stop seeing visitors.

Lakshmidevi, who is in the prison here, has left her spectacles in the Ashram. She has asked me to request you, if you find them, to send them here with somebody. If no one is coming, send them by parcel. And also send 20 *tolas* of asafoetida pills along with it. When you say that Ba's letters were dispatched directly, I suppose you mean that they were sent through the Superintendent. If that is so, please inquire there. In affixing a stamp on the envelope in which you dispatch letters for me, you generally affix it at one of the two ends where it is closed. But unless you affix stamps at both ends, affixing a stamp at one end only serves no useful purpose. It would be advisable, therefore, to affix stamps at both ends. Either do that, or put sealing wax at both ends. Adopt whichever method you like.

You may certainly discuss with other inmates there my suggestion about calculating the value of work at the rate of one anna per hour, but I think for your own observation you will find it very helpful to maintain such a record in an independent book. The books being kept at present will continue to be maintained. The one I have suggested will be in addition to them. If, however, I have been able to explain my idea, you will see that there is so little to be recorded that the work will not be heavy at all.

Moreover we shall be able to judge whether there is any truth in what I have been saying. If the summary at the end of a month reveals a great difference between the actual figure of expenditure and the one arrived at by following the method of calculation suggested by me, we may assume that we shall never be able to close the gap and my mind will then start working in some other direction. I am confident, however, that such a summary will lead to a conclusion which will surprise us. It is my experience that very often because of our lethargy we continue to labour under a mistaken idea, and, if we make proper calculations, we are able to get rid of our preconceived notions and correct our errors. Personally, at the moment, I see no error at all in my reasoning and I believe, therefore, that the result will be excellent. Since for hundreds of years different types of work have been paid for at different rates, we assume that that is the right thing to do but I think it is a false notion.

Did you read the latest letter which Harilal wrote to me? Even the handwriting is not steady. He seems to have written the letter with a trembling hand. Either he has written it in great excitement, or he was drunk when he wrote it. The language is all excitement and insolence. No attention is paid to ordinary syntax, words are left incomplete and even the signature is not completed. I think we should completely forget him now. If God wills, he will reform himself one day. Even in order to open his eyes, it is necessary that we should let him know plainly what we think about him. You say that you got "both" my letters to him. Does that mean that you also got the one which we thought had miscarried?[1] If you got it, did you examine the postmark on it?

The electric treatment seems to have had no effect on the hand. For the first two days, it seemed that it might really do some good. The real trouble just now is not with the right hand but with the left elbow, but the doctor does not give electric treatment for that. He has been thinking of giving radium treatment. Since I spin on the Magan wheel, I do no work at all with the left hand. But there is no cause for worry. So far it has been paining only when I work with it. At other times there is no pain. As for getting Khambhatta here to examine the bone, I cannot say anything just now. Permission for him has been received, but it will not be possible for me to avail myself of it if the reply in regard to Mirabehn is in the negative. I thought

[1] In "Letter to E. E. Doyle", pp. 402-3, Gandhiji refers to a letter dated April 28 to "an erring son"; *vide* also "Diary, 1932", entry under "April 28".

I had sent to you the five names which had already been approved. You know three of them now. The other two are Trivedi and Lady Thackersey. It would be fine indeed if you think you can look after Jayantiprasad's daughter. Jayantiprasad gave me the impression, during the Dandi March, that he was careful in observing rules.

I feel rather unhappy that Chimanlal and Sharda do not improve. I write down here the suggestion which occurs to me just now as to what they should do. I will not write to them separately. Let them take this as addressed to them. Shivaji used to keep indifferent health. He read all the literature on the subject that he could get, tried the diet changes and exercises recommended in the books which he read and succeeded in improving his health. Chimanlal should do something like that. I don't mean that all could try everything that Shivaji did. But Chimanlal has been in the Ashram for a long time, has thought about the subject and has observed my experiments too. It is, therefore, possible that he will hit upon something which his body needs. We have plenty of books on the subject in the Ashram. There is a small book even on chromopathy. This remedy is quite easy to try. The doctor[1] whose treatment helped Amtulbehn employs it in many cases. Light *asana* exercises also may help. Chimanlal should find some time and read about them. According to me, these remedies are more effective than doctors' medicines, and they are spiritually harmless. We often see that even the latter fail. Medical science is altogether imperfect and much of it is based on hypotheses. Since the body of every person is a unique organism, we do not at all exaggerate in saying that there are no remedies which are universally applicable. About Sharda, I think that we know the remedies but they have not all been tried. She also may be partly responsible for this. You should gently persuade her to try them.

I think it was a very good thing that Jamna went to Ranavav. Since Purushottam is with her, you will not have to worry about her at all. Parnerkar's problem is very complicated. Do what you can. Read my letter to Titus. Compared with the heat there, the heat here is a joke. Hence our *tapascharya*, both outward and inward, is no real *tapascharya*. Yours deserves to be envied. I hope and pray that you will survive it.

If all my letters are not translated into Hindi, make it a strict rule that they must be. Even if there are sometimes only

[1] Hiralal Sharma

two or three persons who do not know Gujarati, the letter must be translated, unless the persons themselves do not wish it.

May 30, 1932

I had written one letter to Savitribehn, that is, Mrs. Standenath, and put on it the address given by her. But the letter has been returned from the D.L.O. I am now sending it to you, along with the envelope. If you have more particulars of her address, use it and send the letter by registered post. She must be awaiting a letter from me and, having got no reply from me, must be feeling unhappy. If you find her full address, please send it to me too.

Father Elwin has suggested that we should recite a Christian prayer here every Friday, and that his Christian friends will sing the same prayer on that day and at the same time. They would thus cultivate a communion of hearts with us. Mahadev accepted the suggestion as soon as we read his letter last Friday and we replied to it with *Premal Jyoti*[1]. Hence we have fixed upon that hymn as the one we will sing every Friday. Discuss the matter with Panditji and, if he agrees, sing it every Friday there too at the time of evening prayers. You will observe that I have now resumed writing with my right hand. The doctors here are strongly of the view that the left elbow requires complete rest. Failing this, they think gradually the pain will increase. I have, therefore, given up even writing with the left hand. In a day or two, they will put the whole arm in plaster. Don't get alarmed on reading this, for the elbow has never pained so far except when I have been working with the left hand. The arm is to be put into plaster only as a precaution. The doctors are convinced that this pain has no connection with my diet. People who play tennis also get such pain sometimes, and the doctors believe that, because of my regular spinning for many years, I have strained the elbow much more than tennis players do. Hence they think that it requires complete rest for some time.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8829. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* pp. 485-6.

606. LETTER TO GULCHEN LUMSDEN[1]

May 30, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I thank you for your letter. I well remember the visit of Sir Henry Lawrence to this prison in 1922 or 23, and he is right in his impression that I then passed my time principally between reading *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and spinning at the wheel. It is also true that he found me quite happy. But there was no "lovely orchard" then, nor is there now. There were then, as there are now, some tall trees about. The rooms are bare and barred cells of an ordinary Indian prison. As cells they are well lighted and well ventilated. So long therefore as the surroundings are concerned, there is no question of my memory betraying me at the time of writing. I am exactly in the same surroundings as when Sir Henry saw me. If therefore his description of them gave you the impression of a fairy tale, it was surely erroneous. Happiness after all is a mental state, and for myself, being used, now for more than a generation, to a hard life, I have learnt to detach my happiness from my surroundings.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 9527. Courtesy: Mrs. Hugh Lumsden, Canada

607. LETTER TO A. R. TIJARAY

May 30, 1932

MY DEAR TIJARAY,

I have your letter, received just now. The previous letter you refer to was not received at all. I would have attended to it there and then. Sardar Vallabhbhai who is present whilst I am dictating this and who has shared all the correspondence with me has also no recollection whatsoever of anything having been received from you. However I know no one in Vienna. I have never been there. But I have no doubt that when you tell the

[1] Addressee's name is supplied from *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 189.

specialist the whole of your story he will treat your case as he must have treated similar cases before. If it is of any value, you may certainly use this letter to identify you as Principal, Tilak Vidyalaya, Nagpur. I hope you will benefit by the treatment there. I am glad that Vithalbhai is improving. Please remember me to him.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

A. R. TIJARAY
(PRINCIPAL, TILAK VIDYALAYA, NAGPUR)
C/O PENSION B. PFEFFER
WILHELM EXNERGASSE 28
WIEN IX, AUSTRIA

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. 1, p. 241

608. A LETTER[1]

May 30, 1932

In my opinion unity will come not by mechanical means but by change of heart and attitude on the part of the leaders of public opinion. I do not conceive religion as one of the many activities of mankind. The same activity may be either governed by the spirit of religion or irreligion. There is no such thing for me therefore as leaving politics for religion. For me, every, the tiniest, activity is governed by what I consider to be my religion.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 189

609. LETTER TO KUSUM DESAI

May 30, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

You did well in paying a visit to Pyarelal. He had become impatient to get my reply. I have written a postcard to him directly from here. Mahadev will write by and by. Inform me what your movements for some time will be. If you intend to write to Pyarelal, inform him that I am still reading Ramakrishna's and

[1] The addressee had advised Gandhiji to give up politics and to preach the truths common to Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.

Vivekananda's books[1]. I will send them over to Rameshwardas[2] when I finish them.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1839

610. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

May 30, 1932

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

I got your letter. I hope that you got my last letter which I wrote before you wrote yours and which I sent to you through the Ashram. Stick to the vow of spinning. Do not take any new vow until your mind has become firm. However, adhere with the utmost firmness to the vows which you have taken and maintained so far. Even a small vow becomes a rudder to the ship of one's life, if one sticks to it in the face of all difficulties. It will be all right if you can win over your mother and sister-in-law with loving persuasion, otherwise you should patiently tolerate their opposition. They should not be forced against their wishes. It will be good if you send the boy to the Gurukul at Kangri. There he will learn Hindi, Sanskrit and English and almost everything else that they teach at a high school. If he is unwilling to go to the Gurukul, he may go to Santiniketan. In that case he should learn Bengali. If even that does not suit him, he may join the Kashi Vishvavidyalaya. He will not be able to study at home. Since you have withdrawn him from the high school there, it would not be proper to send him back to it. Nor would it be right to interrupt his studies. It would, therefore, be desirable to send him to one of the three places mentioned above.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 181

[1] Presumably by Romain Rolland; *vide* "Diary, 1932", entries under May 22 and 23.

[2] Rameshwardas Poddar of Dhulia

611. A LETTER[1]

May 30, 1932

I believe, and doctors also hold the same view, that no woman can be absolutely and simply raped. Not being prepared to die, a woman yields to the wrongdoer. But a woman who has overcome all fear of death would die before submitting to the outrage. It is easy to say this, but difficult to act in this manner. Hence when a woman yields to the wrongdoer unwillingly, it is but right that we should regard her as having been raped. If such a woman becomes pregnant, she should not resort to abortion. A woman who has been the victim of a rape does not deserve any censure. On the contrary, people should have compassion for her. If, however, a woman wishes to conceal the very fact of her having been raped, who is to say what right she has, whether or not she has a right to resort to abortion? In her fright she would believe that she had such a right and do as she wished. After the outrage, a woman has no right at all to commit suicide, nor need she do it.

My replies to your letters or to the letters of others, being written from jail, must not be published. I write numerous letters from here and it would not at all be proper to publish them. The Government may even tolerate the publication of all these letters, but a satyagrahi ought not to take such freedom. This is one of the restrictions which a satyagrahi voluntarily imposes on himself. The world is not impatient to know my views and act according to them. Even if it is, it should exercise patience at present. Nor do I myself attach so much value to my views. And, moreover, I cannot say about any view which I may express now that I will not change it in future. I may not mind expressing my personal views to a person like you. I would assume that you would bear in mind my temperament and my short-comings and take them for what they are worth.

And now about the questions you put. Some of them are such as should not be asked at all. A seeker may ask a person in whom he has faith for solutions to a very few of his immediate

[1] *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, gives only the initial letter "S" of the addressee's name.

difficulties. He should never raise hypothetical issues. He may certainly ask if he has any doubt about a step which he intends to take. If he asks a question about something which has really happened, he should give all details of the incident. He should not frame a general question on the basis of the incident, for in doing so he might ignore some relevant detail of that incident. It would be risky, in that case, to apply to that particular incident the reply given to a general question.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 188-9

612. DIARY, 1932[1]

JANUARY 4, MONDAY, YERAVDA[2]

Spun 190 rounds. The police came and arrested me at 3 o'clock in the morning. Left after reciting a *bhajan*. Elwin[3], Privat, Mills and others were present. Vallabhbhai also was arrested at the same time. We met in the jail and are lodged together. I may say I spent the day resting. I could take a walk for the first time today after landing. Started reading Will Durant's book[4]. Ate no fresh fruit today. Had two seers of milk.

JANUARY 5, TUESDAY

Spun 172 rounds. Rested well today also. Sent a note[5] about our wishes in regard to visits, etc., to I. G. just for his information. Continued reading Durant's book.

JANUARY 6, WEDNESDAY

Spun 196 rounds. Major Martin called. Got a copy of *The Times of India* today. Finished Durant's book. Commenced another by Crozier[6]. Feeling of exhaustion persists. Were weighed—I was 105.5 [lb.] and the Sardar 147.

[1] In Gandhiji's own hand, in Gujarati; for the entries under October 14, 1931, when Gandhiji commenced this Diary, to January 3, 1932, *vide* Vol. XLVIII.

[2] From January 26, 1932 Gandhiji described this as "Yeravda Mandir". This place-entry is not reproduced under subsequent dates.

[3] Verrier Elwin

[4], & [6] For the titles of the books, *vide* p. 76.

[5] This and some other letters mentioned in this Diary are not traceable.

JANUARY 7, THURSDAY

Spun 197 rounds. Completed Crozier's book. Commenced Brailsford's[1]. Good rest still needed. Ate a *papaya* today. Will start taking tomatoes tomorrow.

JANUARY 8, FRIDAY

Spun 195 rounds. Telegram to Lady Shaffee on the death of Sir Mohammad Shaffee. Satavlekar sent *Purushartha*[2]. A Gujarati book arrived.

JANUARY 9, SATURDAY

Spun 212 rounds. Today completed Brailsford's *Rebel India*. Received two baskets of fruits and vegetables from Trivedi.

JANUARY 10, SUNDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Yesterday commenced reading Mahomedali Al Haj Salmin's *Imam Hussain*. Completed it today. Now am reading his book on Khalifa Ally. Entered silence today at 3 o'clock. Have still not gained the strength to spin or work more. Feel like lying down all the time. Slept thrice during the day. Ate the grapes and oranges sent by Trivedi.

JANUARY 11, MONDAY

Spun 163 rounds. Received some mail today, namely, letters from Mira, Kashinath, Kalavati and Prabhavati. A lawyer named Iyer sent a book on the Scout Movement.

JANUARY 12, TUESDAY

Spun 206 rounds. Some more letters and books arrived today. Received permission to write letters.[3] Wrote to Narandas, Ba, Mira, Radha, Amina and others. Also to Prabhavati and Kashinath.

JANUARY 13, WEDNESDAY

Spun 185 rounds. Commissioner Clayton called. Received a letter from Prabhavati. Wrote to Narandas enclosing postcards to Mahalakshmi and others as also to Chandrashankar and Hemprabhadevi. Dahyabhai visited Vallabhbhai. Ordered dates today.

[1] For the title of the book, *vide* p. 76.

[2] A Marathi monthly

[3] The first letter to Narandas Gandhi, however, is dated January 11, 1932; *vide* p. 4.

JANUARY 14, THURSDAY

Spun 185 rounds. Finished today the letter to the Viceroy which I had been drafting since yesterday. Completed reading life of Ally yesterday. Today commenced reading Hoare's *The Fourth Seal*. Received slivers, sandals and carding-bow from the Ashram. Also wrote a letter to Samuel Hoare. Were weighed today—my weight was the same, Sardar's decreased by three pounds.

JANUARY 15, FRIDAY

Spun 194 rounds. Handed over to the Major letters to the Viceroy and to Hoare. Hoare's book is nearly finished. Dahyabhai came again today with a doctor for Sardar.

JANUARY 16, SATURDAY

Spun 163 rounds. Received Kumarappa's book[1] on the Matar inquiry. Got *The [Bombay] Chronicle* today. Received some letters. Finished Hoare's book. Commenced MacDonald's[2].

JANUARY 17, SUNDAY

Spun 196 rounds. I could read a good deal today. Again two baskets of fruits and vegetables arrived from Trivedi.

JANUARY 18, MONDAY

Spun 166 rounds. The Ashram mail—Narandas, Khushalbhai, Champa, Pranjivan, Abbas, Parnerkar, Surendra, Balkrishna, Chhotelal, Durga, Ratilal, Bhansali, Vasumati, Padma, Valji, Prabhudas, Ramdas, Mira, Chhotalal Gandhi, Mahuwa, Maganlal Shamji, Urmila Devi, Abdul Majid (Barabanki), Raihana, Kamala Nehru, Nirmala Joshi, Hakim Abdul Latif (Dasuya), Surbala Desai (Surat), Prof. Trivedi. Completed MacDonald's book.

JANUARY 19, TUESDAY

Spun 228 rounds. Received today intimation regarding newspapers, visits, etc. Seems to be satisfactory. Received letters from Pyarelal and others. Received fruit from Lady Thackersey. Commenced yesterday the book about the Matar Taluka inquiry.

JANUARY 20, WEDNESDAY

Spun 173 rounds. The Collector paid a visit today. Wrote letters to *The Tribune*, *The Leader* and *The Hindu* for copies. Completed

[1] J. C. Kumarappa's *Survey of Matar Taluka*
[2] Travelogue

Kumarappa's book, Ramanathan's pamphlet and Hayes' *Indian Bibles*. Started Ruskin's *Guild of St. George*[1].

JANUARY 21, THURSDAY

Spun 205 rounds. Ashram letters arrived today and also one from Kashinath. Stanley Jones sent me his new book. Wrote letters yesterday and today: Lester, Hopkinson, Sir George Barnes, Narandas, (Kusum, Pyarelal, Maitri, Mahavir), Esther Menon, Wrench, Mary Lauder. Today completed Ruskin's book about the Guild. Commenced Shah's[2] *Federal Finance*.

JANUARY 22, FRIDAY

Spun 231 rounds. Sent yesterday's letters for posting. In addition, wrote to Ramananda Babu, the *Chronicle*, Marie Petersen. Col. Steele examined both of us.

JANUARY 23, SATURDAY

Spun 153 rounds. Did not take milk today. Again a basket of fruit has arrived. Wrote a letter yesterday to Sir Frederick Sykes and handed it to the Major today. Wrote a few letters during the day for the Ashram. Received today letters from Hemprabha Devi and others. Also from Raihana.

JANUARY 24, SUNDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Cresswell called this morning. Did not take milk even today. Wrote a number of letters for the Ashram in the afternoon.

JANUARY 25, MONDAY

Spun 201 rounds. Completed the Ashram mail. It contained 61 letters and a talk on Chapter XIV [of the *Gita*]. The other letters are to Prabhavati, Raihana, Hemprabha, *Kangani*[3] Sundaram and Vishvanath Thanorkar. A number of books arrived again today, including a volume of Ingersol's speeches. Wrote to Josiah[4] acknowledging receipt of these books.

JANUARY 26, TUESDAY

Spun 211 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters for posting. Took milk today. Ordered dates. The *Gita* number of *Purushartha*

[1] A slip for *St. George's Guild*

[2] K. T. Shah

[3] Literally, "jobber"

[4] Dr. Josiah Oldfield, editor of *The Vegetarian*, President of Bayswater Vegetarian Society founded by Gandhiji during his stay in England for studies; *vide* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 53-4.

arrived. Prepared draft of letter to Emerson. It was so long and I was so much engrossed in it that I did not hear the clock strike seven. Hence prayer was delayed by half an hour. Wrote letters to Vichchhan Charan Patnaik, Kashinath, Edith Scott, Hope and also to Narandas, having forgotten to enclose Chapter XIV with the letter to him. Commenced *The Ruin of Egypt.*

JANUARY 27, WEDNESDAY

Spun 190 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters to the Superintendent. Today wrote one to Prof. Shah and handed over this also to him. Mira, Pyare Ali, Noorbanu and Radha paid a visit. Received copies of *The Hindu* and *The Leader.* Received the Ashram mail. Wrote a postcard to Narandas about the Giri family. Wrote some letters.

JANUARY 28, THURSDAY

Spun 172 rounds. Handed over to the Superintendent letters to Emerson and Narandas. Wrote letters. Received a copy of *The Leader.*

JANUARY 29, FRIDAY

Spun 179 rounds. Received *The Tribune* today. More books arrived. Received letters from Narandas and Prabhavati. Airey [*sic*] received orders to go to Bombay. I asked him to carry Hoare's book. Wrote some letters. I still feel sleepy.

JANUARY 30, SATURDAY

Spun 168 rounds. I feel great need for sleep. Wrote some letters during the day.

JANUARY 31, SUNDAY

Spun 207 (two hundred and seven) rounds. Completed *The Ruin of Egypt.* Commenced Hayes' book[1] on the cow. Among some letters received from abroad was one from Esther, too.

FEBRUARY 1, MONDAY

Spun 235 rounds. Wrote letters and got them ready. The Ashram packet—Manilal (Dhiru, Mangal, Gulab), Chintamani, *The Hindu*, Kali Babu, Prabhavati, Kamla Nehru, Chandrahas, Kevalram Dave (along with his sisters'), Emma Harker, Khushal Shah, Swami Chidatmananda, Virendranath, Hariram Mohandas, Prabhakar, Biharilal, Kantilal Trivedi. Received five books from Shah. The second mail that arrived contained Manilal's letter from South Africa. Quinn went to Visapur. Dahyabhai met the Sardar.

[1] *The Book of the Cow*

FEBRUARY 2, TUESDAY

Spun 164 rounds. Wrote to Lady Vithaldas not to send fruits. Handed other letters to the Superintendent for posting. Completed A. E.'s *Candle of the Vision*. Commenced Kinley's *Money*. Wrote letters to Joan Widdikiss, Gertrude Keller, De Valera, Rev. W. Hayes, Prof. Hoyland, Carla, rmani[1].

FEBRUARY 3, WEDNESDAY

Spun 152 rounds. I do not know how I spun fewer rounds today. There was the correct number of slivers. Handed letters written yesterday to the Superintendent for posting. The magistrate called. Were weighed. Vallabhbhai's weight was 144.5 lb., mine 107. Read the life of Shri Bhupati Nath. In the afternoon, Lady Vithaldas, Prof. Trivedi, Damodar and Vidya called. Mira sent leather for the soles and honey. 190 persons, including Ramdas, Chhaganlal Joshi, Surendra and Somabhai came from Sabarmati [jail]. Mani, Lilavati, Nandubehn and others arrived and they were transferred to Belgaum [jail]. Received the Ashram mail.

FEBRUARY 4, THURSDAY

Spun 210 rounds. Wrote some letters to the Ashram. Wrote a separate one to Mira. Two bottles of honey came from Lady Thackersey.

FEBRUARY 5, FRIDAY

Spun 210 rounds. Spoke to the Superintendent about meeting fellow-prisoners, wrote to him a letter. Received copy of *The Modern Review*. The Superintendent gave me oil for applying on the elbow.

FEBRUARY 6, SATURDAY

Spun 244 rounds. Today commenced reading biography[2] of Zaka Ullah. Wrote letters to the Ashram; also to Mary Barr, Karimnagar, Ramananda Babu.

FEBRUARY 7, SUNDAY

Spun 180 rounds. Wrote out summary of Chapter XVI of the *Gita*. Felt miserable upon reading the painful news of a girl's attempt on the life of the Governor of Bengal. Translated speech about God.[3]

[1] The first letter is illegible in the source.
[2] *Zaka Ullah of Delhi* by C. F. Andrews
[3] *Vide* p. 75.

FEBRUARY 8, MONDAY

Spun 241 rounds. Wrote letters to Anjana Devi, Lalita, Buken, Agatha Harrison, Zenkoff, Davis, Nagardas, Esther, Raihana, Khandelwal, Ambikaimukkam, 36 for the Ashram. Completed Kinley's *Money*. Commenced Shah's *Sixty Years of Economic Administration of India*. Did not take milk or curds today. Took almond paste.

FEBRUARY 9, TUESDAY (RAMZAN ID)

Spun 192 rounds. Sent for posting letters which were made ready yesterday. The Major did not attend office on account of Id. Received news of Prabhudas's arrest.

FEBRUARY 10, WEDNESDAY

Spun 185 rounds. Punjabhai, Juthabhai, Shankar, Amina and Kanti called on me today. Received the Ashram mail. Kanti gave a few books among which was *Sangitshastra* of Barve sent by Panditji. Received letter from the Governor of Bombay. We were weighed today. I was 105¾ [lb.] and Vallabhbhai 141.5.

FEBRUARY 11, THURSDAY (VASANT PANCHAMI)

Spun 170 rounds. Got Lilavati Munshi's letter. Letters—Mira, Manu Trivedi, Narandas, Lilavati Munshi.

FEBRUARY 12, FRIDAY

Spun 183 rounds. Despatched yesterday's letters. Continued Ashram mail today. Wrote quite a number of letters.

FEBRUARY 13, SATURDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Prof. Glen Clarke sent me his books. One or two other books arrived. Wrote Ashram letters this afternoon also. Vallabhbhai passed blood in stool. The Major, therefore, examined it.

FEBRUARY 14, SUNDAY

Spun 201 rounds. Wrote letters during afternoon. Translated Chapter XVII in the evening.

FEBRUARY 15, MONDAY

Spun 217 rounds. There are 68 letters for the post. Narandas for the Ashram, Chapter XVII, and also to West, Narsi Premji, Jivraj Mehta, Philip Hartog, K. T. Shah, Chhaganlal, Metalbhai, Gertrude Keller, Rasiklal Chunilal, Velshi Ranshi, Harilal Govindji, Maganlal Mehta, Nirmala Pandya.

FEBRUARY 16, TUESDAY

Spun 189 rounds. Major Martin paid a visit today. The question of my meeting other prisoners was discussed. As a result, I wrote a letter. Handed over yesterday's letter to the Superintendent. Received copy of the *Golden Book of Tagore* as also of the biography of A. Gray [*sic*]. Telegram to the Maharaja of Bikaner. Wrote letters to Narandas, Jhaverchand, Chakechake [*sic*], Hanumanprasad, Gosibehn, Ramananda Babu, Mrs. Gael.

FEBRUARY 17, WEDNESDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters to the Superintendent. Mira, Valji and Lilavati came to see me today. There was some argument about Valji and Lilavati. In the end they saw the point. Mira will be arrested tomorrow. Valji brought a book on astronomy and three letters. Received honey and *papaya* from Lady Thackersey. Mira brought soap powder and almonds.

FEBRUARY 18, THURSDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Received Gandiva wheel from Lakshmidas. Received a letter from Andrews. There is an enquiry on about the people coming to see me. Received the Ashram mail. Started writing letters for the Ashram. Were weighed today—Vallabhbhai was 142 [lb.] and I, 106. Wrote letters to Lakshmidas and Damodardas.

FEBRUARY 19, FRIDAY

Spun 150 rounds. Handed over yesterday's two letters for posting. Dahyabhai paid a visit to Vallabhbhai. Received four books from Maithilisharan. Received a telegram from Magan about going abroad. Wrote Ashram letters.

FEBRUARY 20, SATURDAY

Spun 205 rounds. The District Magistrate called. Wrote letters. Talked with the Superintendent about Ishu. Someone has sent a book about Mussolini.

FEBRUARY 21, SUNDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Completed summary of Chapter XVIII. Practically finished Ashram mail. Took white gourd as the fifth item.[1] Changed bed-cover which had got completely worn out.

[1] The reference is to Gandhiji's vow to take not more than five items in his day's food, which he had taken in 1915 during his visit to the Kumbha Mela in Hardwar; *vide* Vol. XIII, p. 164.

FEBRUARY 22, MONDAY

Spun 160 rounds. G. N. Gokhale has sent his book on the Dharmashastras. Letters to the Ashram totalled 32. In addition to [letter to] Narandas and the summary of the *Gita* chapter, the others include those to Ghanshyamdas, Kamla Nehru, Rani Vidyavati, Maithilisharan, Jerajani, Rameshwarlal Bajaj, Raihana. Completed Shah's *Sixty Years of Economic Administration of India* and Maithilisharan's *Panchavati*. Commenced *Saket*.

FEBRUARY 23, TUESDAY

Spun 183 rounds. Ishu has been sent for a night. Spoke with the Superintendent about visits. Sent yesterday's letters.

FEBRUARY 24, WEDNESDAY

Spun 159 rounds. The Civil Surgeon examined me. Received the Ashram mail. Commenced writing letters.

FEBRUARY 25, THURSDAY

Spun 222 rounds. Sir Samuel's letter arrived, also one from Mira. Today Yashwantprasad, Jivanlal, Lady Vithaldas were to pay a visit but did not because of Superintendent's objection. Wrote to Mira, Harjivan, Babalbhai and Ranchhodbhai Kunvarji's maternal uncle—and of course the Ashram letters. Yesterday began Salvemini's book on Mussolini, having finished *Saket*.

FEBRUARY 26, FRIDAY

Spun 176 rounds. Wrote letters for the Ashram. Handed over yesterday's letters to the Superintendent. Received 24 postcards today. Received some Hindi books from Kalyan Press.

FEBRUARY 27, SATURDAY

Spun 195 rounds. Dahyabhai called. I also met him. Received [*Life of*] *Henry George*[1] and some other books from America. Received some letters. Wrote and sent a postcard to Ba. Wrote letters for the Ashram.

FEBRUARY 28, SUNDAY

Spun 206 rounds. Ate bread today. Discontinued tomatoes because of stomatitis. Wrote letters for the Ashram and some others. Wrote letters to Sir Fazli and Sir Samuel Hoare.

[1] American economist

FEBRUARY 29, MONDAY

Spun 163 rounds. Handed over two letters of yesterday to the Superintendent. Today received letters from Munshi and others. During these days wrote letters to Lilavati (Munshi), Hemprabha, Esther, Jessie Jones, Sumangal, Lakshmidas, Purushottam, Maganlal Pranjivan, Bhagwanji Anupchand, Mulchand Parekh, Kanu Munshi, Madhavdas Gokuldas, forty-two for the Ashram in addition to Narandas's and on Socrates's ideas about death[1].

MARCH 1, TUESDAY

Spun 153 rounds. Completed [book] about Mussolini. Commenced De Lisle Berne's *Democracy*. Handed over yesterday's letters to the Superintendent. Received dates from Ghanshyamdas. Wrote letters to Radha, Rukhi, Benarsi, Parasram, Tehelramani, Mahulikar, Dinkar Mehta, Trivedi, Lady Vithaldas.

MARCH 2, WEDNESDAY

Spun 163 rounds. Lady Ramanathan sent me her book, *The Ramayana*, Iyer sent a book on exchange and Sathe on morality. Wrote postcards to all the three. Narandas's letter about Khushalbhai's illness. Today commenced "Bal Gita"[2].

MARCH 3, THURSDAY

Spun 217 rounds. Ba and Shanta called on me. Fruit arrived from Lady Thackersey. Dinkar brought honey and dates. Received the Ashram mail. Wrote Ashram letters. Sent yesterday's postcards for posting and a telegram to Khushalbhai.

MARCH 4, FRIDAY

Spun 205 rounds. Some books arrived. Letters from Sir George Barnes and from Ghanshyamdas. Oranges arrived from Wardha. Wrote the Ashram letters. Dahyabhai and Yashoda paid a visit.

MARCH 5, SATURDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Five of the skeins today are likely to be short by three rounds. Government orders regarding visitors from outside [the Ashram] received today. Wrote a letter to Narandas. The other letters were for the Ashram.

[1] *Vide* pp. 169-70.

[2] Gandhiji wrote "Reminiscences of Imam Saheb" instead; *vide* pp. 183-4, 202-3 and 217-9; also "Letter to D. B. Kalelkar", p. 186.

MARCH 6, SUNDAY

Spun 195 rounds. Today resumed almonds which I had given up for some time. Wrote a letter to Major Bhandari about receiving visitors. Handed over for posting letter to Narandas. Completed *Democracy* yesterday. Commenced Upton Sinclair's *Wet Parade*.

MARCH 7, MONDAY

Spun 180 rounds. 37 Ashram letters, "Reminiscences of Imam Saheb", and letters to Birla, Quinn, Kusum, Mrs. William Donaldson, Upton Sinclair, Ishvarbhai.

MARCH 8, TUESDAY

Spun 196 rounds. Today got another improvement effected in the spinning-wheel, that of the spring. Received letters from Lakshmidas, Raihana, Manmohan and others. Wrote to Raihana, Manmohan, Lakshmi and Ramachandra, Gertrude Kellersching, Agatha Harrison, Aubrey Mony, Ramgopal Mehta, Nagardas, Kantilal Shah, Rambiharilal, Lakshmidas.

MARCH 9, WEDNESDAY

Spun 215 rounds. Today I weighed 105.5. Vallabhbhai was 139. Handed over yesterday's letters for posting. Ramdas called. Discussed what would be my duty in case separate electoral rolls were prepared for untouchables. Also prepared draft of a letter to be addressed to Sir Samuel Hoare. Received the Ashram mail.

MARCH 10, THURSDAY

Spun 189 rounds. Today spun on the old spinning-wheel. It took a lot of time. Major brought Emerson's letter. Jaisukhlal and others will come to see me. Received grapes from Trivedi. Mahadev came. Revised letter to Sir Samuel.

MARCH 11, FRIDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Today the Major examined Mahadev's leg. Despatched letter to Sir Samuel through the Governor. Vallabhbhai was willing neither to stop the letter nor to agree to its being sent, either. If his vote counted, it would be a negative one. Mahadev said having regard to my nature such a letter ought to go. Commenced Ashram letters.

MARCH 12, SATURDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Dahyabhai called. Got the book sent by Barnes. Wrote letters for the Ashram.

MARCH 13, SUNDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Wrote the Ashram letters, and one to Emerson.

MARCH 14, MONDAY

Spun 185 rounds. Wrote 41 letters for the Ashram; in addition to these letters, one to Narandas and "Reminiscences of Imam Saheb", [letters to] Sir George Barnes, Shanti Mehta, Bhanumati, Radha, Benarsi, Rukhi, Evelyn Wrench, Keelan [*sic*].

MARCH 15, TUESDAY

Spun 155 rounds. Today Kashi, Jamna, Moti, Lakshmi, Lalitabehn, Jaisukhlal, Durga, Babla and Prabodh paid a visit. Wrote a letter to Martin to the effect that I should receive a reply about seeing Haridas and others by Friday. Today received fruit from Trivedi. Completed *Wet Parade*. Commenced Carpenter's *Adam's Peak to Elephanta*. Wrote letters to Hemprabha, Alexander Gary and Dinkarrao.

MARCH 16, WEDNESDAY

Spun 185 rounds. Major Martin's reply regarding Haridas arrived. Received reply from India Office on behalf of Evans [and] Rogers.[1] Dictated letters [to] Shah, Mulchand Parekh, Oriental Eucalyptus Company, Champaklal, Syed Mustafa Husain, Napoleon, Prithuraj, Shankarsagar. Handed over yesterday's letters for posting.

MARCH 17, THURSDAY

Spun 221 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters. Received the Ashram mail and a letter from Dhiru.

MARCH 18, FRIDAY

Spun 160 rounds. Decision about visiting prisoners is received. Received a painful letter from Champa. Commenced letters for the Ashram. Wrote letters to Narandas, Petavel[2] and Harjivan.

MARCH 19, SATURDAY

Spun 162 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters for posting. Met Joshi, Narasinhbhai and Haridas. Sent dates to Haridas. Received Stokes's book. For the present agreed to content myself with letters from women prisoners instead of meeting them.

[1] The reply was presumably an acknowledgement of the gifts sent by Gandhiji to them after his return to India; *vide* footnote 2 on p. 5.

[2] Captain J. W. Petavel

MARCH 20, SUNDAY

Spun 195 rounds. Completed *Adam's Peak to Elephanta.* Completed *Anagh.* Wrote letters for the Ashram.

MARCH 21, MONDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Letters for the Ashram and letter to Gangabehn. Sent *Federal Finance, Money* and *Sixty Years of Economic Administration of India* to Chhaganlal. Commenced Stokes's *Satyakama*[1].

MARCH 22, TUESDAY

Spun 220 rounds. Wrote four more letters for the Ashram and another to Vithaldas. Handed over these for posting. Shah sent a book about Egypt. Someone sent *Jnaneshwari.* Wrote letters to Lester, Devi, Aristarchi, Muthu, Dinkar, Mettler, Agatha, Hemprabha, Madanmohan, Hiralal, Hanumanprasad, Jethalal.

MARCH 23, WEDNESDAY

Spun 170 rounds. Handed over for posting yesterday's letters and the one written today to Jayakar. Gangabehn paid a visit. Women prisoners have commenced a fast. Had a rather sharp discussion about this with the Major. Sent dates to Haridas. Received the Ashram mail.

MARCH 24, THURSDAY

Spun 159 rounds. Commenced Ashram letters. Prepared drafts of letters to Major Martin and Dr. Norwood. Received *Fors Clavigera*[2]. Received news of breaking of the women's fast.

MARCH 25, FRIDAY

Spun 177 rounds. Handed over for posting letters to Edith Scott, Major Martin, Raihana, Evelyn Wrench, Horace and Dr. Norwood. Wrote letters for the Ashram. Completed Stokes's book. Commenced *Fors.* Today asked for almonds and dates.

MARCH 26, SATURDAY

Spun 214 rounds. The Major informed me that I could write to fellow-prisoners. Hence I wrote letters to Mira, Mani, Jamnalal, Devdas and sent them over. Sent a telegram to Shankerlal on Dhirajlal Banker's death. Got Gangabehn's letter. Sent her slivers. Received dates from Vithaldas, and honey and *papaya* from Lady Vithaldas. Today finished the old stock of almonds. Receiv-

[1] *Satyakama or "True Desires"*
[2] By Ruskin

ed from Rameshwar Rolland's *Life of Vivekananda* and *Ramakrishna*. Received some other books also.

MARCH 27, SUNDAY

Spun 181 rounds. Received Ashram letters and a telegram from Shankerlal. Wrote to him and Lilavati, and also to Emerson, Raghavan. Proofs of the autobiography [for children].

MARCH 28, MONDAY

Spun 177 rounds. Got yesterday's letters. Fuss over giving dates to prisoners. Wrote letters for the Ashram. In one of them wrote about Ruskin. Letters to Taramati, Narasinhbhai's Vimala, Amtul.

MARCH 29, TUESDAY

Spun 208 rounds. The surgeon examined me. Explained about the dates to the Major. Handed over letters for the Ashram, etc.

MARCH 30, WEDNESDAY

Spun 174 rounds. Wrote to the Major about visits. Harjivan and Sharda called. Received letter from Mathuradas. Completed proofs of the autobiography for children.

MARCH 31, THURSDAY

Spun 163 rounds. Wrote to Mathuradas. Received Jayakar's letter. Commenced letters for the Ashram. Have now stopped receiving goat's milk.

APRIL 1, FRIDAY

Spun 184 rounds. Today met Qureshi and two Maharashtrian gentlemen for two hours. Two seers of almonds arrived.

APRIL 2, SATURDAY

Spun 201 rounds. Dahyabhai paid a visit. Telegram to Nargis about Jal. Wrote letters for the Ashram. Received letters from Lester and others.

APRIL 3, SUNDAY

Spun 190 rounds. Wrote and also dictated letters for the Ashram. Dictated letters for some Americans.

APRIL 4, MONDAY

Spun 186 rounds. Handed over for posting letters to Kamla Nehru, Jayakar, Radha, Kanu Desai, Jamu Dani, Chaturbhuj Sharma, 52 for the Ashram. Also a letter to Narandas along with [an article on] "A Saintly Woman of Russia"[1], and letters to

[1] By Mahadev Desai; *vide* p. 261.

Lovan, Rev. Skudder, Henarsa, Prabhavati, Jerajani, Raihana (Pashabhai), Savitri Standenath[1], Shambhushankar, Rev. Smiley.

APRIL 5, TUESDAY

Spun 182 rounds. In addition to yesterday's letters, handed over letters for Shah and Elwin. Dictated letters to Maithilisharan, Ghanshyamdas, Gandalal, Andrews, Tyagi and Gopaldas. Started history of the Ashram. Received books from Santaram and others.

APRIL 6, WEDNESDAY

Spun 192 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters for posting. Added to them a postcard to Durga. I fasted today. Today got a mattress made to serve as a seat for me. Received honey from Lady Thackersey. Completed the first book of *Fors*. Completed Narasinhbhai's letters, *Samarpan* and *Buddha* and *Mahavir*. Commenced second part of *Fors*.

APRIL 7, THURSDAY

Spun 198 rounds. Wrote a letter to Lakshmanrao Kane. Commenced Ashram letters. Cresswell sent two books on astronomy. A carpet arrived from Armenia. Received three seers of almonds. Received letter from Mira. Received a book on Vedanta from Jayakar. Received letter from Nanabhai. Dictated letters to Nanabhai Bhatt, Kartar Singh, Moto Edith, Roberto[2].

APRIL 8, FRIDAY

Spun 234 rounds. Handed over yesterday's letters for posting. Major Mehta arrived. Received letters from Jamnalal, Esther and Nargis. Wrote Ashram letters. Dictated letters to Hanumanprasad, Rameshwar, the Hungarian priest and Ambalal Modi.

APRIL 9, SATURDAY

Spun 235 rounds. Dahyabhai paid a visit. Received books on astronomy and a letter from Hiralal. Major Mehta examined my hand and Mahadev's leg. Applied iodine to both. Dictated a few letters.[3]

[1] Francisca Standenath

[2] The Armenian who had sent the carpet

[3] Here, in the source, followed the following prayer by Prahlad:

नाथ। योनि सहस्त्रेषु येषु येषु व्रजाम्यहम् ।
तेषु तेष्वच्चलाभक्तिरच्युतास्तु सदा त्वयि ॥
या प्रीतिरविवेकानां विषयेष्वनपायिनी।
त्वामनुस्मरतः सा मे हृदयान्मापसर्पतु ॥

APRIL 10, SUNDAY

Spun 237 rounds. Wrote letters for the Ashram. Dictated letters to Mangal Singh, Bhailal, Dinkar, Nageshwarprasad, Charubabu, Induprasad, Jamnalal, Brijkisan.

APRIL 11, MONDAY

Spun 383 rounds (194+189=383). Today completed 375 rounds of yarn without a break. So far a skein was completed on alternate days but today and yesterday there was one skein daily. I intend to keep this up if possible. Received Sir Samuel's reply to my letter about the caravan[1], etc. Completed letters for the Ashram. Handed over yesterday's letters to the Superintendent. Have passed on a telegram for Kamla Nehru. It will go to the I. G. Wrote about "Watching the Heavens" for the Ashram.

APRIL 12, TUESDAY

Spun (186+187)=373 rounds. The first figure within brackets is that of the rounds counted today. The second is that of today's on the spindle. Handed over letters for the Ashram. The letters numbered 28. Dictated to Vallabhbhai letters to Gangabehn and Chhaganlal. A postcard to Shankarlal Marwadi. Handed these three together to the Major. In the afternoon dictated letters to Khambhatta, Nargis, Narandas, Lalita Subbiah, Shanti Mehta, Shankarbhai, Major Martin and Hiralal.

APRIL 13, WEDNESDAY

Spun (188+207)=395 rounds. This morning wrote letters to Hiralal, Ramdhari, Lakshmi Raja, Dhiru Revashankar. Letters and copies of "Watching the Heavens" to Gangabehn and Chhaganlal. Handed over these and yesterday's letters to the Major. I am fasting today. Still I weighed 104.5 lb. Last Wednesday I was 103.5. Received the Ashram mail.

APRIL 14, THURSDAY

Spun 168+217=385 rounds. Handed over letters to Radhika, Esther and Hemprabha Devi for posting. Today met Mohanlal, Manibhai and Dhurandhar. I saw Shankarrao Deo who has been fasting. He did not listen to me. Bali, Manu, Kunvarji and Kusum called on me.

[1] Sir Samuel Hoare, in his broadcast on January 28, 1932, had said: "Our policy is simple, straightforward and sympathetic. It is a policy of progress combined with firmness. . . . Though dogs bark, caravan passes on."

APRIL 15, FRIDAY (RAMANAVAMI)

Spun 158+248=406 rounds. Received a telegram from Ranjit, wrote a letter to Deo, sent Mahadev to Deo. He gave up his fast. Wrote an acknowledgement to Khagendra Priya Barua and acknowledged receipt of khadi. Received three seers of almonds. The earlier stock is not yet over.

APRIL 16, SATURDAY

Spun 127+282=409 rounds. Major Proll called. Dahyabhai paid a visit. Received letters from Khambhatta, Hiralal and some others.

APRIL 17, SUNDAY

Spun 93 rounds. Today spun with the left hand. There was considerable strain but as there had been some extra rounds every day the skein could be completed. The object in turning the wheel with the left hand and drawing the yarn with the right hand is to spare exertion to the left elbow which is paining. Today Major Mehta gave electric treatment to both the hands. Dictated postcards to Khambhatta, Mahavir, Hiralal and Shakarabhai.

APRIL 18, MONDAY

Spun with the left hand 85 rounds. Wrote letters for the Ashram. Today started eating from the new stock of almonds. Today worked till 11 o'clock. Handed over for posting yesterday's letters and an earlier one.

APRIL 19, TUESDAY

Spun with the left hand 85 rounds. Handed over 39 Ashram letters as well as "Watching the Heavens" and the letter to Narandas [for posting]. About a hundred books arrived from Nanabhai. Got the Government's permission to see five people not belonging to the Ashram, and Trivedi whenever necessary. Letters from Chhaganlal, Ramdas. Reply to Ramdas. Electric treatment is being continued.

APRIL 20, WEDNESDAY

Spun 112 rounds. Received the Ashram mail. Wrote to Gangabehn, Chhaganlal Joshi and Surendra. Handed over the letters to the Major. Received the Ashram mail. Dictated letters to Ghanshyamdas, Nanabhai, Nagardas and Chaturbhuj. Sent letters to Sumangal and Kanta.

APRIL 21, THURSDAY

Spun 92+33 rounds. Sent two letters to Col. Doyle, about Kaka Kalelkar and others and about visits. Wrote to Lady Thackersey about cotton, to Nanabhai, Ghanshyamdas, Nagardas and Chaturbhuj.

APRIL 22, FRIDAY

Spun 182 rounds. Today I tied up in a bundle all the 28 skeins I had spun up to the 17th. Completed a skein of yarn spun by left hand. Sent for posting letters to Raihana, Maganlal Pranjivan, Ba, Mithubehn and Kanti. Received letters from Maithilisharan, Verrier, Mani, Kaka.

APRIL 23, SATURDAY

Spun 135 rounds. Letters—Mani, Narahari, Prabhudas, Amethia and Khambhatta. Dahyabhai paid a visit. Received books on astronomy from Shivaji and Hiralal. A book by Ford from Pashabhai. Completed second Urdu reader.

APRIL 24, SUNDAY

Spun 27 + 141 = 168 rounds. Wrote a good many letters. Almost all pending letters have been dealt with. Commenced third Urdu reader. Commenced Heath's *Astronomy*.

APRIL 25, MONDAY

Spun 171 rounds. Letters—Taramati, Devdas, Kunvarji, Harjivan, Janakibehn, Bindheshwariprasad, Satyendra Nath Ganguli, Chandrashankar, Elwin, Brijbhushan Chaudhari, Sharda Kotak, Ramananda, Lakshmidas, Sushila Nayar, Radha, Vaidehisharan and Mathuradas. Received books on the Buddha sent by Nair.

APRIL 26, TUESDAY

Spun 63 + 93 = 156 rounds. Letters for the Ashram, along with "Necessity of Drawing up a Balance-Sheet", and letters to Maithilisharan, Dastane, Hiralal (Shankar), Hemprabha, Shankerlal. Today the new Magistrate paid a visit. Received books on massage sent by Khambhatta. Received the Ashram mail.

APRIL 27, WEDNESDAY

Spun 182 rounds. Letters—Maude Royden, Dr. Nair, "Apana Sabu"[1], Dyer, Doyle and Natarajan. Vallabhbhai wrote a letter to the Major asking him to call in a nose specialist for him. I also wrote one. Received letter from Mills today.

[1] Trade-mark name of a soap

APRIL 28, THURSDAY

Spun 100 + 101 = 201 rounds. Sent for posting letters to Narandas and Harilal. Triveni called. Vallabhbhai changed his timings of meals, so that he could eat three meals. Received letter from Maganlal.

APRIL 29, FRIDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Letters—Maganlal Pranjivandas, Polak, Narandas, Dinkar Mehta, Santok. Wrote a long letter to Gangabehn. Sent her a lot of books. Spent two hours today with Ramdas, a teacher of the Tilak Vidyalaya and Gokuldas Talati. Received letters from Samuel Hoare and Percy Bartlett. Almonds sent by Bhimji were exhausted today. A new stock of three pounds arrived yesterday, which will be utilized from tomorrow. Received Upton Sinclair's autobiography.

APRIL 30, SATURDAY

Spun 71 + 126 = 197 rounds. Dahyabhai paid a visit. Urdu copy-book arrived. Began eating from new stock of almonds.

MAY 1, SUNDAY

Spun 208 rounds. Received Bernard's letter and Francis Adam's poems. Wrote and dictated letters.

MAY 2, MONDAY

Spun 41 + 196 = 237 rounds. Received telegram about Yashoda's death. Handed over for posting letters to Hoare and Sankey.

MAY 3, TUESDAY

Spun 179 + 16 = 195 rounds. 43 letters for the Ashram; they include "Lesson of the National Week", [letters to] Prabhavati, Dahyabhai, Bernard, Bhagirathi Shirodkar. Received the Ashram mail. Received honey from Parikh Dashrathlal.

MAY 4, WEDNESDAY

Spun 239 rounds. Letters—Mathuradas, Noorbanu, Lakshmidas, Manjukesha, Doyle, Agatha, Taramati, Kamala of Broach, Surbala, Mills, Lakshmidevi, Kamu, Hemprabha, Bartlett, Ramdas. Mani Parikh and Shankerlal Parikh visited Mahadev. Received some books, slivers and a dhoti from the Ashram. Trivedi sent dhotis.

MAY 5, THURSDAY

Spun 120 + 82 = 202 rounds. Letters—Sharda, Narasimhan, Lakshmi, Shankerlal, books to Chhaganlal, "Watching the

Heavens", Marathi *Purusharth*, *Bhajanavali*, and the *Gita* number to Gangabehn and letter to Anasuyabehn. Mani Parikh, Vanamala, Mohan, Kusum, Girdhari paid a visit. Brought clothes, fruits, etc. Received Magan spinning-wheel. The almonds were over today.

MAY 6, FRIDAY

Spun 24 rounds on the Magan spinning-wheel. Letters—Walsh, Damji, Dasharathlal, Shankar, Nanabhai of Akola, Ibrahimji. Death of Gangadevi. Spun on the Magan spinning-wheel today. It worked with difficulty. Today ate ground-nuts. Sarojini's letter about Jail.

MAY 7, SATURDAY

Spun 56 rounds on the Magan spinning-wheel. Letters—Hanumanprasad, Chandulal Patel, Prof. Nayak, Narandas, Mira, Col. Doyle, (about Kaka and about letters which get lost), Gangabehn, Sarojini Naidu, Chhaganlal Joshi. Dahyabhai paid a visit. Received "Apna Sabu". Hiralal sent Mukerji's book on astronomy. Perhaps for the first time today spat blood while gargling. It is not likely to have been from the lungs.

MAY 8, SUNDAY

Spun 71 rounds on the Magan spinning-wheel. Letters for the Ashram. The ground-nuts are over.

MAY 9, MONDAY

Spun 59 + 36 = 95 rounds. This is the total of those spun by the left and the right hand. Began eating from the new stock of almonds. Letters—Upton Sinclair, Benarsi, Hiralal, Harjivan, Evelyn Wrench. Have almost completed the Ashram letters. Received letters from Gangabehn and Chhaganlal, a spinning-wheel from Kantawala and Modi's book on the *Gita*. Today finished "Apana Sabu".

MAY 10, TUESDAY

Spun 102 rounds. I could not at all manage with the right hand today. Worked for almost five hours. Thirty-eight letters for the Ashram including the article on "Cleanliness, Truthfulness, Purity, Neatness" and a letter to Raihana. Am reading life of Nabi Saheb[1] by Imam Saheb.

[1] *Sirat-un-Nabi*

MAY 11, WEDNESDAY

Spun 131 rounds. Today the right hand gave good work. Mail —letters to Gangabehn and Biharilal Kantawala. A rather sharp argument with the Superintendent about the specialist for Vallabhbhai. Received Col. Doyle's letter about Kaka and others, a letter from Shardabehn, and Vinayachandra's books. Today I weighed 105.5, Vallabhbhai 140.5, Mahadev 147.5.

MAY 12, THURSDAY

Spun 126 rounds, all with the right hand. Letters—Doyle, Bhikhabhai, Devdas, Lakshmidas, Pyare Ali. Panditji, Lakshmibehn, Mathuri and Yashwantprasad paid a visit. Received a second packet of letters from Narandas.

MAY 13, FRIDAY

Spun 90 rounds. Today could not give even two and a half hours to spinning. Letters—Mira and Shardabehn. Surendra, Patwardhan and Rabade were with me for more than two hours. Books by Upton Sinclair and also from Gondal arrived. Commenced Rolland's *Ramakrishna*.

MAY 14, SATURDAY

Spun 97 rounds. Felt very tired. Chhaganlal Joshi, Chandulal, Dahyabhai paid a visit. Books from Trivedi.

MAY 15, SUNDAY

Spun 78 rounds. Wrote letters for the Ashram.

MAY 16, MONDAY

Spun 90 rounds. Letters—Sushila (Phœnix), Trivedi, Mira. Got letter from Fulchand and others.

MAY 17, TUESDAY

Spun 115 [rounds]. Forty-five letters for the Ashram, including an article on self-sacrifice, and letters to Maithilisharan, Natarajan, Prataprai Modi, Birla, Fulchand Bapuji. Dictated a good many letters today.

MAY 18, WEDNESDAY

Spun 165 rounds. Getting used to spinning by hand and foot. Letters—Rameshwar Bazaj, Bindheshwari, Trivedi, Nanabhai M., Radha, Narasimhan, Lalita, Nirmala Mashruwala, Barda Yukil, Baldev Pra[sad] and Ram Mohan Roy (Bezwada). Lady Thackersey, Mani and Mathew paid a visit. Permission to see Mira has been refused. Received new stock of almonds today.

MAY 19, THURSDAY

Spun 168 rounds. Letters—Col. Doyle and Mirabehn. Today started eating from the new supply of almonds.

MAY 20, FRIDAY

Spun 183 rounds. I now seem to have acquired good control over the spinning-wheel. Letters—Sumangal Prakash, Tilak, Mithubehn Petit, Ranchhodji Shastri, Narandas, Govindbhai Chavda, Kailashnath Katju, Kamla Nehru.

MAY 21, SATURDAY

Spun 209 rounds. Letters—Nargis, Dinkar. Telegram about Bipin Babu. Dahyabhai and Mani paid a visit.

MAY 22, SUNDAY

Spun 193 rounds. Could write a good many letters. Completed Rolland's *Ramakrishna*.

MAY 23, MONDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Letters—Taramati M., Raihana, Prabhudas, Dr. Roy, Hemprabha, Esther, Devichandra, Narayan Pandya, Ramanandan, Gertrude Keller, Sharda Kotak. Commenced *Vivekananda*. Wrote letters for the Ashram, etc.

MAY 24, TUESDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Letters—thirty-nine letters for the Ashram, including an article on "The Cat–A Teacher", Miss Elizabeth Howard, Jayaprakash, Maud Cheeseman, Jethalal Govindji, Nanakchand, Rukhi.

MAY 25, WEDNESDAY

Spun 202 rounds. Letters—Gangabehn, Lakshmidas, Abhay, Mulchandbhai, Satyacharan Law.

MAY 26, THURSDAY

Spun 210 rounds. Letters—Niranjanlal, Siddhanath Pant, Mira, Shantikumar, Natarajan, Parachure Shastri, Muriel, Agatha Harrison, Devi West. Yesterday Pyare Ali, Noorbanu, Sharda, Amtul, Prema and Sushila paid a visit. Received slivers from Chhakkaddas and *Vichar Sagar*, *Panchadashi*, *Tilak Panchang* from Trivedi. Pyare Ali brought honey and mangoes.

MAY 27, FRIDAY

Spun 217 rounds. Letters—Krishnachandra Agrawal, Pyarelal. Today met Mahadev Mailar, Maganbhai and Rabade.

Maithilisharan's books arrived. Letters from Ghanshyamdas, Devdas, Elwin and others.

MAY 28, SATURDAY

Spun 205 rounds. Letters—Sukhlal, Ghanshyamdas, Elwin, Devdas, Ba. Sent a spinning-wheel to Lilavati. Dahyabhai and Mani paid a visit. Major Proll paid a visit. New stock of almonds arrived. Completed Mander's astronomy. Commenced Hindu astronomy.

MAY 29, SUNDAY

Spun 200 rounds. Stopped washing clothes from today on account of [the pain in] the left arm.

MAY 30, MONDAY

Spun 211 rounds. Letters—Maganlal Mehta, Amtul, Dawoodbhai and Tilakam, Raja, Lakshmi, Karsandas, Gosibehn, Esther.

MAY 31, TUESDAY

Spun 220 rounds. Mail—letters for the Ashram (36 including "Lesson of Death"), Harjivan, Gulchen Lumsden, Tijaray, Sumangal, Aristarchi, Newham, Renwick. Today started eating from the new stock of almonds. Completed Rolland's *Vivekananda*. Received the Ashram mail.

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 19337

ADDENDA

1. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

January 23, 1932

CHI. BABU,

You seem to be demanding too much. Should I write when you reply or even without your writing? You seem to be still suffering from asthma. Why? How much cod-liver oil did you take? Did you feel better after taking it or not? What are you doing at present? Do you have cough? How much was your weight last year? Do you take sun-baths? Do you massage your body with oil? Fresh air, sunshine and oil masssage are essential for you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9904. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

2. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

February 3, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

I have your letter. Your handwriting is good. Your weight is far too little. You can sit in the sun after 8 a.m. Before that, you must cover yourself. As the heat increases and if you don't feel cold, you can remove the clothes and massage the body. By doing this you will not feel the chill. You may not take cod-liver oil during Gangabehn's treatment but you can massage the body with it. They say that too helps.

How much milk do you take?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9905. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

3. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

March 27, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Call to mind the hymn "One step enough for me". What do we gain by thinking what we should do in changed circumstances? When the time comes it will suggest itself. Normally we can say that most things will still have to be learnt even in swaraj. I hope you know that [after independence] those of you who are above sixteen will be free then to do as they wish. People like me will only tender advice.

Now tell me, why don't you have massage or sun-bath?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9908. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

4. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

May 1, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Learn everything about spinning. Spinning is not for those who can get other useful occupations. That is why mill-hands are not told to spin for a wage. Spinning is meant for the millions of Indians who do not have an occupation for six months in the year. In short, a person may spin under any pretext; what his spinning adds to the wealth of the nation is the benefit we get from it.

Khadi is to be preferred because through it we serve the poor to the utmost.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9910. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

5. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

May 28, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

How is it that you don't get rid of your illness at all? "*Satya* is bound to triumph" does not mean that it should be victorious exactly at the time we desire it to be. Moreover we cannot say that what we are convinced to be true is the truth. So we may say: 'If what we think to be truth is indeed the truth, it is bound to succeed.'

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9911. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

VERRIER ELWIN ON GANDHIJI'S ARREST[1]

Gandhi was staying in a house called Mani Bhuvan and he invited us to stay with him there. There was great excitement in the city; the Viceroy had finally rejected the Congress offer of peace; Nehru was already in jail, and arrest of other national leaders was expected at any moment.

But when we reached Mani Bhuvan and climbed to the roof, we found a great serenity in astonishing contrast to the crowds and turmoil outside. The roof was a very pleasant place. Low tents had been erected, and there were palms and plants; at least 300 people could gather there. It was cool and you could see the stars. Bapu was sitting at the wheel quietly spinning. He had already begun his weekly silence. I carried on a one-sided conversation with him, and he wrote down his questions and replied on a scrap of paper which I still have. I must have begun by asking if there was anything I could do.

He wrote:

"I have sent for you for that very purpose. I have told Mahadev all I have been revolving in my mind. When he comes he will tell you or I shall briefly write what is wanted.

How are you keeping in health?

He [Mahadev][2] should be coming shortly. If he does not during the time I finish this I shall write out what I want to say.

You are sleeping here? If so is your bedding, etc., arranged?"

Then Shamrao and I retired to the smaller tent and Bapu lay down about three yards from us, while some thirty others lay on the roof under the canvas shelter. Mrs. Gandhi and Mirabehn gave us a surprisingly satisfying supper of dates, nuts and fruit. But I could not sleep. As I wrote at the time, 'I felt I had to keep vigil, and for hours I was under those splendid stars that rose, tier upon tier above me, while beside me Bapu slept like a child committed to his Father's hands. I thought of Christ going up to Jerusalem, his eyes filled with determination and courage: and I seemed to see the Spirit of Christ travelling the centuries like a bright sword turned against all wrong and injustice. Among these sleeping friends so dear to us, brave, pure-hearted, sincere, the spirit of love was manifest and unconquerable.

[1] *Vide* p. 2.
[2] As given in the source.

At last I lay down between Shamrao and Bernard on my hastily improvised bed on the floor, just beside Bapu, and fell into a deep sleep, when suddenly like the coming of a dream there was a stir and a whisper: 'The police have come.'

We started up and I saw what I shall never forget—a fully uniformed Commissioner of Police at the foot of Bapu's bed, and Bapu just waking, a little bewildered, looking old, fragile and rather pathetic with the mists of sleep still on his face.

'Mr. Gandhi, it is my duty to arrest you.'

A beautiful smile of welcome broke out on Bapu's face and now he looked young, strong and confident. He made signs to show that he was keeping silence.

The Commissioner smiled and with great courtesy said, 'I should like you to be ready in half an hour's time.'

It was five minutes past three. Bapu looked at his watch and the Commissioner said, 'Ah, the famous watch!' and they both laughed heartily. Bapu took a pencil and wrote, 'I will be ready to come with you in half an hour.'

The Commissioner laid his hand on Bapu's shoulder with a gesture so full of affection that I thought it was an embrace, until I realized that it was the formal token of arrest. Bapu then cleaned his teeth and retired for a moment. The door was guarded, and all of us who were on the roof sat round in a circle. I looked out on to the road where some had been keeping all-night vigil and where a little crowd, very quiet and orderly, had collected, but there were no special police precautions.

When he was ready, Bapu sat in the midst of us for the prayers and we sang together the song of the true Vaishnava. Then Bapu took pencil and paper and wrote a few messages, some last instructions to his followers and a letter[1] to Sardar Vallabhbhai, which was as follows: . . .

He then wrote a short note[2] and gave it to me: . . .

Then Bapu stood up to take farewell. It was a strange sight: the police at the door, Mirabehn and Devdas bustling to and fro with the baggage which was already packed, Bapu surrounded by his friends, many of them weeping. Mrs. Gandhi with tears running down her cheeks said, "Can't you take me with you?" Everyone in turn touched his feet, and when I said goodbye he pulled my ear with a smile. He was in very good spirits: he might have been going to a festival rather than a jail.

Then, followed by the whole company, he went downstairs. Shamrao and I watched from the roof. The tiny figure got into the car and the crowd surged round it. It was a wonderful tribute to India's non-violence that there were only a few policemen and they were able to be in the midst of

[1] *Vide* p. 1.
[2] *Vide* p. 2.

the crowd without fear of danger. Just at that moment a message came to say that Sardar Vallabhbhai, the Congress President had also been arrested. And then the crowd scattered as the car bearing the very soul of India drove away through the dark and deserted streets.

The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin, pp. 65-8

APPENDIX II

LETTER FROM R. M. MAXWELL[1]

Secret
No. S. D. 310

HOME DEPARTMENT (POLITICAL),
BOMBAY CASTLE,
January 16, 1932

FROM

R. M. MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, C.I.E.
ACTING SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

TO

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

SIR,

I am directed to inform you that the Governor in Council has been pleased to issue the following orders with regard to the privileges to be allowed *for the present* to the State Prisoners, Messrs Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel and regarding the arrangements to be made for their periodical medical examination.

2. PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS: Both the prisoners should be allowed the following periodicals and newspapers: *The Times of India, The Bombay Chronicle, The Leader* (Allahabad), *The Tribune* (Lahore), *The Hindu* (Madras), *The Indian Social Reformer, The Modern Review, Young India* and *Navajivan.*

3. LETTERS: Both the prisoners may, as requested by them, be allowed to write letters once a week, or oftener with the previous permission of the Superintendent of the Prison. All correspondence to and from the prisoners should be censored by the Superintendent of the Prison. Vernacular letters which cannot be translated in the Prison should be sent to the Oriental Translator to Government for translation unless the District Magistrate can arrange to have them translated in his office. All objectionable correspondence

[1] *Vide* p. 18.

should be withheld. In doubtful cases a reference should be made to Government. Any letters which the Superintendent considers should be seen by the Police should be forwarded by him to the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C.I.D., Poona.

4. HEALTH AND PERIODICAL MEDICAL EXAMINATION: The two prisoners will remain in the medical care of the Superintendent of the Prison, but arrangements should be made in consultation with the Surgeon General with the Government of Bombay for their full medical examination with as little delay as possible by the Civil Surgeon, Poona, in conjunction with the Superintendent and for a report of the examination to be submitted to Government at once. Similar arrangements should be made for subsequent medical examination by the same two officers of Mr. Gandhi once a month and of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel once in three months. A copy of the report should in each case be submitted to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor. The Superintendent should also consult the Civil Surgeon, Poona, if at any time either prisoner appears to be suffering in health or is attacked by any serious illness.

I am to request that you will communicate to the prisoners, through the Superintendent, the orders in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 so far as they pertain to them with the omission of the instructions regarding censorship of correspondence in paragraph 3.

I am also to request that you will invite the attention of the Superintendent to the first sub-section of Section 5 of the Bombay Regulations and ask him to furnish the Government with a report required by this sub-section.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
ACTING SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Pt. I

APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM SIR SAMUEL HOARE[1]

April 13, 1932

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I write this in answer to your letter of 11th March and I say at once I realize fully the strength of your feeling upon the question of separate electorates for the "Depressed" Classes. I can only say that we intend to give any

[1] *Vide* pp. 190-3 and 391-2.

decision that may be necessary solely and only upon the merits of the case. As you are aware, Lord Lothian's Committee has not yet completed its tour and it must be some weeks before we can receive any conclusions at which it may have arrived. When we receive the report we shall have to give most careful consideration to its recommendations and we shall not give a decision until we have taken into account in addition to the view expressed by the Committee the views that you and those who think with you have so forcibly expressed.

I feel sure if you were in our position you would be taking exactly the same action we intend to take. You would await the Committee's report, you would then give it your fullest consideration and before arriving at a final decision you would take into account the views that have been expressed on both sides of the controversy. More than this I cannot say. Indeed I do not imagine you would expect me to say more.

As to the Ordinances, I can only repeat what I have already said both publicly and privately. I am convinced that it was essential to impose them in the face of the deliberate attack upon the very foundations of orderly government. I am also convinced that both the Government of India and the local Governments are not abusing their extensive powers and are doing everything possible to prevent excessive or vindictive action. We shall not keep the Emergency measures in force any longer than we are obliged to for the purpose of maintaining the essentials of law and order and protecting our officials and other classes of the community against terrorist outrages.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI, ESQUIRE

The Bombay Chronicle, 13-9-1932

APPENDIX IV

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN R. V. MARTIN AND R. M. MAXWELL[1]

(*A*) *R. V. MARTIN'S LETTER TO R. M. MAXWELL*

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS,
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY,
POONA,
March 15, 1932

MY DEAR MAXWELL,

I enclose a letter I have just received from M. K. Gandhi. May I please have a reply by return regarding interviews with other prisoners? He seems to be getting very agitated on the subject,

[1] *Vide* p. 208.

I have no knowledge regarding the illness of the prisoner he mentions.

Yours sincerely,
R. V. MARTIN

R. M. MAXWELL, ESQ. C.I.E., M.A. (Oxon), I.C.S., J.P.
SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT
HOME DEPARTMENT, BOMBAY

HOME SECRETARY.

Orders have already been passed. Please see that they issue promptly.

R. M. MAXWELL
16/3

(B) *R. M. MAXWELL'S LETTER TO THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS*

P. 147 No. S. D. 2357

HOME DEPARTMENT (POLITICAL),
BOMBAY CASTLE,
March 16, 1932

FROM
R. M. MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, C.I.S., I.C.S.
ACTING SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

TO
THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

SUBJECT: Interviews between Mr. Gandhi and other prisoners in the Yeravda Jail or Camp Extension.

SIR,

In continuation of my letter No. S. D. 1568, dated the 4th March 1932, I am directed to state that Mr. Gandhi may be allowed to see other prisoners in the Yeravda Main Jail or Camp Extension on the conditions suggested by you, namely:

1. Interviews to be permitted with not more than three prisoners at one time, and not oftener than once in two weeks.
2. The interviews not to be treated by either side as a means of enquiring into the treatment or conduct of other prisoners in the Jail. The Jail arrangements, discipline and political subjects not to be discussed.
3. The interviews to take place in the office of the Superintendent of the Prison.

4. Interview time: 20 minutes.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
R. M. Maxwell
16/3
Acting Secretary to Government

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Pt. I

APPENDIX V

EXTRACTS FROM MIRABEHN'S LETTER[1]

April 8, 1932

Received a letter from Mirabehn with 24 pages, every line of it instinct with spotless devotion. She would not be happy unless she lived with and rendered personal service to Bapu. But Bapu wants her to get rid of this desire, as otherwise she would feel herself stranded when Bapu was no more with us. This controversy has been on ever since Mirabehn came to India. In today's letter she has poured out her wonderfully transparent heart:

Bapu, I am never without that thought in my mind, as to how best to serve you. I think and pray and reason with myself, and it always ends the same way in my heart of hearts. When you are taken from us, as in jail, an instinct impels me to work with all my strength at outward service of your cause. I feel no doubt and no difficulty. When you are with us, an equally strong instinct impels me to retire into silent personal service—trying to do anything else, I feel lost and futile. The capacity for the former depends on the fulfilment of the latter. The one is the counterpart of the other, and something continually tells me that it was for fulfilment in that way that I was led to you. The instinct is so strong that I cannot get round it or through it or over it. It is difficult to ask you to have faith in it as the full proof of its correctness can only leave it at that. This much I know full well that during this struggle my strength, capacity and inner peace and happiness are much greater than last time, because I had been able to serve according to my instinct (except for one short spell of anguish since your previous release). The fact that I was on the point of a breakdown when I came here had nothing to do with this question. It was sheer over-work, because when I saw that I was shortly going to be arrested, I simply spent my strength recklessly, knowing an enforced rest was coming. And there was more than enough work around me to be reckless over.

[1] *Vide* pp. 278-80.

Who knows if it is all delusion! But a woman has to go by instinct. It is stronger with her than any amount of reason, and her full strength can only be harnessed and brought into service if her nature is able to express itself. I have no thought, no care, no longing in all the world except for you—*you the cause —you the ideal.* To serve that cause in this life and to reach that ideal in after-life, God who has brought me from utter darkness to the light of your path will surely not answer my prayers by leaving me now to follow a wrong instinct. I have not written all this for the sake of argument, but simply to share with you the result of my ceaseless strivings to *understand* since I have been in jail.

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 62-3

APPENDIX VI

LETTER FROM E. E. DOYLE[1]

Canfidential
D.O. No. 332

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS,
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY,
POONA,
April 23, 1932

DEAR MR.,

Reference your D. O. of 22nd instant.

I have written to Belgaum for detailed particulars regarding the persons in whom you are interested—and hope to be in a position, within the week, to let you have the information you desire.

If circumstances permit, I intend visiting Belgaum as early as possible, and will then be able to give you first-hand information.

I can find no reply to Major Martin's letter so I presume, an answer was addressed to him by name, and is now chasing him to England. I trust, though, that I shall soon have all the information you require.

Yours,
E. E. DOYLE

MR. M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] *Vide* pp. 340-1.

APPENDIX VII

LETTER FROM E. E. DOYLE[1]

No. 356 of 1932

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS,
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY,
POONA,
April 28, 1932

DEAR MR.,

I have just received a report from the Superintendent, Belgaum Central Prison, in reply to my letter. This does not give me all the details I desired, so I have asked for a further and more precise report by return post. All four persons have lost weight since admission to jail custody—but as reasons for this are not stated, I have asked for them to be supplied.

Three of the four are on special diet as shown below:

D. B. KALELKAR—	Loaf bread	12 oz.
	Milk	2 lb.
	Molasses	2 oz.
	Olive Oil	½ oz.
MANIBEHN PATEL—	Milk	2 lb.
	Rice	1 lb.
PRABHUDAS GANDHI—	Wheat bread	1 lb. 2oz.
	Dhall & Vegetables	
	Milk	8 oz.

I shall communicate with you again on this subject, as soon as I hear from Belgaum Central Prison.

Yours,
E. E. DOYLE

MR. M. K. GANDHI
YERAVDA

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] *Vide* p. 368.

APPENDIX VIII

LETTER FROM E. E. DOYLE[1]

No. 365 of 1932

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS,
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY,
POONA,
May 2, 1932

DEAR MR.,

I have received the further information I required and am now in a position to assure you that you need have no cause for worry in respect of any of the persons you named in your letter to me.

D. B. Kalelkar's previous medical history is known to the Medical Officer at Belgaum, who is watching his health carefully and has prescribed treatment and diet as is necessary.

P. Gandhi was in hospital from 9-3-1932 to 12-3-1932 with malaria, which has left him slightly anaemic—but he is being treated for this—and is doing well.

Manibehn Patel suffered occasionally from lumbago for which she was treated and has obtained relief. Also [she] is habitually constipated. This is treated as necessary with laxatives and change of diet.

N. D. Parikh is reported as being quite fit in spite of a small loss in weight.

I trust this will relieve your mind.

Yours,
E. E. DOYLE

MR. M. K. GANDHI
YERAVDA

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

[1] *Vide* p. 396.

APPENDIX IX

RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S APPEAL[1]

VISWABHARATI,
SANTINIKETAN,
BENGAL,
March 22, 1932

From the depths of the present atmosphere of suffering the cry has come for the inauguration of a new age of faith and reconciliation, for a fellowship of understanding between races and nations alienated by cruel politics and diplomacy. We in India are ready for a fundamental change in our affairs which will bring harmony and understanding into our relationships with those who have inevitably been brought near to us. We are waiting for a gesture of goodwill from both sides, spontaneous and generous in its faith in humanity, which will create a future of moral federation, of constructive works of public good, of the inner harmony of peace between the peoples of India and England.

The visit of our friends from England has confirmed the immediate possibility of such an intimate fellowship and truth in our mutual relationship, and I feel called upon to appeal to all who have the welfare of humanity at heart to come forward at this critical hour and courageously take upon themselves the task of fulfilling the moral responsibility, which is before us, of building upon the bare foundation of faith or acceptance of truth in a spirit of generous mutual forgiveness.

The memory of the past, however painful it may have been for us all, should never obscure the vision of the perfect, of the future which it is for us jointly to create. Indeed, our experience of the futility of suspicion and hostility must inspire us with a profounder belief in the truth of the simple fellowship of hearts, in the mighty power of creative understanding between individuals as well as nations inspired by a common urge of love.

Advance, 23-6-1932

[1] *Vide* p. 397. The message was given to the Society of Friends Deputation at Santiniketan in March. Dr. Tagore asked them to take it personally to Gandhiji but permission was refused by the Government of India.

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CHRONOLOGY

(January 4—May 31, 1932)

January 4: In Bombay, at Mani Bhuvan, Gandhiji was arrested at three in morning.
In letter to Vallabhbhai Patel, conveyed message to people.
Taken to Yeravda Central Prison, interned with Vallabhbhai Patel.
In Patna, Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, was arrested.
Dr. M. A. Ansari assumed Presidentship.
Jawaharlal Nehru was tried and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment.
Four new Ordinances were promulgated; All Congress organizations were declared unlawful; but not the Congress and its flag.

January 5: Arrests and convictions on large scale in Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi.
Gujarat Vidyapith was declared illegal and seized.

January 6: Hartal in Bombay; lathi-charge in Coimbatore.

January 7: In Ahmedabad, Mahadev Desai, D. B. Kalelkar were arrested; and in Karachi, Jairamdas Doulatram.

January 8: In New Delhi, Dr. M. A. Ansari was arrested; Sardul Singh assumed Presidentship of the Congress.

January 9: Viceroy received Sapru and others.
In Madras, C. Rajagopalachari, S. Satyamurti were arrested; foreign-cloth picketers lathi-charged.

January 10: Kasturba was arrested near Bardoli.

January 11: In Tirupur lathi-charge Kumaraswami died.

January 12: Gandhiji obtained permission to write letters.

January 13: In Allahabad and Madras, police seized Congress offices.

In Ahmedabad, "Navajivan" office was locked up.

January 15: In letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State, Gandhiji said: "The initiative for every step was mine and it was a logical outcome of my creed of satyagraha."

At Surat, Kasturba, Manibehn Patel and Mithubehn were convicted.

In Calcutta, 30 students, including girls, were arrested.

January 16: In Bombay, Jamnalal Bajaj and Dr. Hardikar were arrested.

Home Department, Bombay, issued instructions on privileges to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai Patel.

January 18: Hundred and six religious leaders of U.S.A. appealed to British Premier to release Gandhiji.

January 19: In Madras, influential non-Congressmen issued statement protesting against lathi-charges.

January 20: In Bombay, J. M. Sen Gupta was arrested on board s.s. *Ganges*, and taken to Yeravda Prison.

January 23: Gandhiji wrote to the Bombay Governor to stop repression and make amends.

January 24: Gandhiji was allowed an interview per week.

January 25: In Legislative Assembly, Lord Willingdon said: "There can be no compromise in resisting the civil disobedience movement. . . . No Government worth the name could hesitate to accept the challenge."

January 26: In Ahmedabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Lucknow, Independence Day processions led to arrests.

January 27: Mirabehn met Gandhiji.

January 28: Sir Samuel Hoare, in a broadcast, said: "Our policy . . . is a policy of progress combined with firmness. . . . Though dogs bark, caravan passes on."

January 29: In Bombay police firing, one person was killed.

February 2: Devdas Gandhi was arrested.

February 5: In letter to M. G. Bhandari, Superintendent, Yeravda Central Prison, Gandhiji sought permission to meet fellow-prisoners.

February 6: At Calcutta University Convocation, Sir Stanley Jackson, Governor of Bengal, was fired at by a girl student.

February 14: Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Acting Congress President, was arrested.

February 17: Mirabehn arrested for refusal to leave Bombay, sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment and sent to Arthur Road Prison, Bombay.

February 21: In letter to Narandas Gandhi, Gandhiji completed summary of last chapter of *Bhagavad Gita.*

February 22: In Delhi, Consultative Committee of Round Table Conference reassembled under Chairmanship of Viceroy.

February 24: Gandhiji was examined by Civil Surgeon.

February 26: In a letter said that health was the chief reason for giving up milk.

February 27: Independent Labour Party of U.K. issued manifesto condemning Government's repressive policy in India.

February 28: Dr. Moonje and M. C. Rajah, as representatives of Hindu Mahasabha and Depressed Classes, cabled British Premier their agreement for joint electorate system with reservation on population basis.

February 29: G. S. Bajpai, I.C.S., appointed to succeed K. V. Reddy as Agent-General in South Africa.

March 1: In letter to R. V. Martin, Gandhiji sought early decision on question of meeting fellow-prisoners.
Started writing with left hand as right hand pained.

March 4: In Delhi, Consultative Committee of Round Table Conference met.

March 5: Gandhiji received orders permitting to see visitors.
In letter to Narandas Gandhi, gave instructions about informing Jail Superintendent before anybody visited him.
Navajivan Press was returned.

March 6: In letter to M. G. Bhandari, Gandhiji sought clarification of term "political" with reference to his visitors.

March 7: In letter to D. B. Kalelkar, informed that he was getting up at night to study position of stars.

March 10: Was joined by Mahadev Desai, who was transferred from Nasik Jail.

March 11: In letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, conveyed intention to resort to fast if proposal to create separate electorate for Depressed Classes was implemented.

March 12: Discussed astronomy with Mahadev Desai.

March 13: In his letter to Gandhiji, Sir Samuel Hoare stated that on question of separate electorate no decision would be taken without considering views of Lothian Committee and Gandhiji's supporters.

Kasturba was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined Rs. 50 or 1½ months' imprisonment in default.

March 16: Home Department, Bombay, passed orders permitting Gandhiji to see fellow-prisoners.

March 25: In House of Commons, Sir Samuel Hoare made statement on Indian situation.

March 26: Gandhiji received permission to write to Jamnalal Bajaj and other co-workers in prison.

March 28: In letter to H. W. Emerson, expressed distress over proposal to "sell out" lands of "recalcitrant" farmers and urged him to desist from such action.

March 29: Was examined by surgeon.

April 2: In letter to Dudhibehn Desai, said that there was nothing wrong with his right hand. He was not using it for writing "merely as a measure of precaution".

April 5: In letter to Maithilisharan Gupta, expressed views on *Saket*, *Anagh*, *Panchavati* and *Jhankar*.

April 6: Government banned Congress session in Delhi.

April 7: In letter to C. F. Andrews, Gandhiji explained that "fasting unto death is a corrupt expression. . . . It is fasting unto a new life."

April 8: In letter to Mirabehn, gave an account of his daily schedule of food, work and sleep.

April 11: In telegram to Kamala Nehru, expressed distress over injury sustained by Swarup Rani Nehru in police assault during National Week at Allahabad.
Lothian Committee met at Simla.

April 12: In letter to Narandas Gandhi, Gandhiji gave instructions to send cable to America to explain Ashram's policy of not claiming any rights over its publication or to grant them to others.

April 15: In letter, appealed to Shankarrao Deo, a fellow-prisoner, to give up his fast.

April 18: Government banned Reception Committee of Delhi Congress session.

April 21: Sarojini Naidu was ordered not to leave Bombay.

April 22: Sarojini Naidu was arrested in Bombay and M. M. Malaviya in Delhi.

April 24: In Delhi, police dispersed Congress session presided over by Ranchhodlal Amritlal and arrested him; arrested 400 Congressmen.
Gandhiji was awarded service to mankind medal by Community Church of New York.

April 27: In letter to Harilal Gandhi, said: "I will still not give up hope of your reformation for I have not given up hope about myself."

April 29: In House of Commons, Sir Samuel Hoare said: "There clearly cannot be any question of co-operation with anyone associated with civil disobedience. If Mr. Gandhi shows a disposition to restore the relations which existed at the Round Table Conference, he will not find the slightest difficulty."

April 30: Robert Douglas, District Magistrate of Midnapore was fired at and seriously wounded.

May 7: In letter, Gandhiji requested E. E. Doyle to enquire into missing letters.

May 8: All-India Depressed Classes Congress was held at Kamptee.
In South Africa, Kunwar Maharaj Singh was appointed Indian Agent.

May 10: In London, it was decided to re-establish London Branch of Indian National Congress.

May 11: In letter to Devdas Gandhi, Gandhiji stated that he would have to take milk after his release from jail.
Lothian, before leaving for U.K., issued farewell message on Indian Constitutional reforms.

May 14: Hindu-Muslim riot in Bombay.

May 15: In letter to Fulchand Bapuji, Gandhiji said: "There are no restrictions on food except those which are self-imposed nor on the hours of rest and sleep. Carding and spinning are going on fairly well. . . . And we also read."

May 18: In Bombay, Mirabehn was released from Arthur Road Prison.
Mirabehn was prohibited from seeing Gandhiji.
In letter to E. E. Doyle, Gandhiji wanted Government to reconsider decision regarding Mirabehn and permit her to see him.

May 20: Bipin Chandra Pal passed away.

May 21: Ranchhodlal was sentenced to nine months' rigorous imprisonment.

May 22: Manager, *Navajivan*, and Editor, *Bombay Samachar*, each sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment.
Gandhiji began to use Gregorian date in correspondence.

May 24: In letter to Satyacharan Law, Gandhiji conveyed tributes to P. C. Ray on his 70th birthday.

May 26: Meeting of British Socialists presided over by Fenner-Brockway, sent fraternal greetings to Congressmen, especially those in prison.

May 27: In letter to Verrier Elwin, Gandhiji communicated decision to sing Gujarati version of "Lead Kindly Light" at 7.40 every Friday evening and believed that the addressee would join him from wherever he was.
In letter to Devdas Gandhi, paid generous tribute to Narandas Gandhi for his "firmness, patience, courage, renunciation and good judgement."

May 28: Bengal anti-terrorist Ordinance was renewed.

INDEX OF TITLES

INDEX

ADDENDA II

[illegible]

[illegible] ...Hindu letter. Didn't

[illegible] ...Nandalal? C. Shah

[illegible]

[illegible] ...Mahadev's Diary, Vol. I, pp. [illegible]

CORRIGENDA

PAGE	FOR	READ
[illegible]	[illegible] 1942	*December 30, 1942*
[illegible]	[illegible] 1942	*December 31, 1942*
[illegible]	[illegible] 1942]	*May 26, 1940*
[illegible]	[illegible] February 9, 1942]	*August 26?, 1942*
[illegible]	April 5?, [illegible]	*April 5, [illegible]*

[illegible] ...removed from this volume.)

PAGE	FOR	READ
[illegible]	*March 24, 1942*	*March 14, 1942*
[illegible]	[what]	what is implied in the verses

ERRATA

PAGE		FOR	READ
9	Footnote 2, line 2	P. Hertzog	P. Hartog
45	Item 69, title	*HARI-ICHCHHA S. KAMDAR*	*HARI-ICHCHHA P. KAMDAR*
63	Item 98, line 1	Karu	Kanu
107	Item 159, title	*HARI-ICHCHHA S. KAMDAR*	*HARI-ICHCHHA P. KAMDAR*
187	Line 6 from bottom	woman, who	woman who
244	Item 300, title	*TILAKAM*	*TILAKAN*
258	Item 318, line 4	motor-cars	voters
322	Line 14	good	God
335	Footnote 3	Not traceable	*Vide* pp. 182-3.
478	Footnote	traceable for	traceable; for
501	Lines 10-1	betraying me at the time of writing. I am	betraying me, for at the time of writing I am
514	Line 2, entry under March 1	De Lisle Berne's	Delisle Burns's